COLLEGE
OF THE PACIFIC

GIFT OF
George P. Mains

EX LIBRIS
George Preston Mains
A.B., A.M., D.D., LL.D.
VOL. NO.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_W9-CRY-170

RELIGION AND EXPERIENCE

Carl Hentschel, Ph. Sc.

Very Sincerely Yrs

J. Pomeroy

College of the Pacific
Stockton, Calif.

RELIGION & EXPERIENCE

BY

J. BRIERLEY, B.A.
("J. B.")

Author of "The Common Life," "The Eternal Religion," "Studies of the Soul," "Ourselves and the Universe," &c., &c.

New York EATON & MAINS
Cincinnati JENNINGS & GRAHAM

1906

36482
1/17/40
gift of Geo. P. Mains

BR
100
B76

Author's Note

THE present volume is a study of religion from the standpoint of experience. In the Introduction the endeavour is made to sketch a philosophy of experience and to show its relation to the Christian faith of to-day. In the succeeding chapters the principles of the Introduction are applied to the solution of some of the various religious problems of our modern world.

LONDON,
July, 1906.

Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Our New Senses	34
II.	The Psychology of Prayer	42
III.	The Religion of Calamity	51
IV.	What Was Pentecost?	60
V.	The Law of Change	68
VI.	Religion and Crime	75
VII.	Pleasure	84
VIII.	Religion and Ghosts	92
IX.	Religion and the Concrete	100
X.	Doctrine and Life	107
XI.	Life's Accumulations	121
XII.	Past and Present	128
XIII.	When it is Heaven	136
XIV.	Fatigue	144
XV.	Of Moral Stimulants	151
XVI.	A Question of Age	160
XVII.	"Under Direction"	168
XVIII.	The Ethics of Victory	176
XIX.	The Soul's Distillations	184
XX.	Our Unordained Ministry	192
XXI.	The Solitaries	200
XXII.	The Broadening of Life	208
XXIII.	Politics and Religion	216
XXIV.	A Study of Backgrounds	224
XXV.	Concerning Births	232
XXVI.	Public Meeting Religion	240

the strength and the limitations of the human mind. Professor James's fascinating volume on "The Varieties of Religious Experience" has appealed to every class of readers. Heterodoxy is as much interested in it as orthodoxy. It offers material which the scientist and the mystic, the Christian and the Atheist, may alike build into their own special thought structure. The exploitation of this region by workers of such opposite tendencies is reacting in a remarkable way upon current systematic theology. The co-operation in the field of religious experience of science and faith, of metaphysics and anthropology, is compelling theologians to revise their whole method of inquiry and to restate their results. It is obvious that our age, on its way to a resettlement of the grounds of its belief, requires first of all to see its way clearly on this primary question. We propose, then, to explore a little on our own account a portion of this region, and to pronounce, as well as we can, on some of the things it contains.

II

And first of all, what do we mean by experience? By experience, taking it first in its most general sense, we may be said to mean the total impression made upon us by the world we live in. This impression, whether of a given moment or of a lengthened period, contains, as we perceive, two main factors. There is the outside, objective fact, and there is the inner mind which perceives the fact. And the thing which immediately strikes us here is

the enormous, the overwhelming importance, for the proper appraising of any reported experience, of this last element. The supremely difficult thing here is accurately to estimate the extent to which the outer fact takes shape and colour from the quality of the perceiving mind. Before philosophy comes in, our notions, for instance, of the relations between ourselves and the outside world are of the crudest. One of the things about which the untrained man is so entirely clear is the solid earth which his senses report to him. He is so sure about his globe, green with its meadows in England, yellow with its sands in Africa, white with its snows at the Pole. When, however, he begins to reflect a little, above all when he has read his Locke and his Kant, he finds things not quite so easy. Awkward questions arise. Could there be any white snow or yellow sand apart from a mind which perceives white or yellow? What is white or yellow outside my mind? Before he has gone far he discovers that every perception of his outside fact is a manufactured article, worked into shape by a most elaborate machinery inside him. He discovers that upon each outside impression there has been put the impress of a number of thought-forms supplied by his own mind. He has stamped on the raw material offered by the senses, ideas of time and space, of cause and effect, of necessity and contingency; ideas which work from within, and shape this material their own way. He finds, in fact, to his astonishment, that he is, to a large extent, the maker of his own world. From this, his first excursion in quest of reality,

he comes back with the conviction that the one thing he does know something about is his own mind and its operations. What is outside has to be taken largely on faith.

The next truth he learns is also one about mind. His own mind, he finds, is not alone. It is one of a multitude with which he is continually in contact. And a vitally important feature in connection with these related minds is the unity that obtains among them. The impressions made upon him by the outside world are, he perceives, practically those made by it on his neighbour. The same laws are at work in these two interiors. Their perceptions of form, of colour, of extension, of causality, are seemingly identical. It is, indeed, through the sameness of these impressions, and of the inner laws which construct them into ideas, that language, science and philosophy have become possible. There seems, then, to be the same world outside us all, reflecting itself on us in the same way.

Our daily experience in this, its most immediate and constant form, has, when looked at in this way, given us two important results. It has, in the first place, taught us that the world we know best, the one of which we can be most entirely sure, is our inner world; that what we discern of an outside universe is at best a reflection, an image cast on a mirror. The realities with which we are most in contact are invisible and spiritual. The second of these results is that of the unity of this mental realm, its community of impression and of procedure. But this, properly considered, compels us to a further step. How does this unity of minds arise?

Is it a chance, a fortuitous circumstance ? When we examine the leaves on an oak tree, and perceive that each in the mass of foliage is framed on the same lines, woven of the same material, and obeys the same laws as all its fellows, we do not regard this as a chance occurrence. We see the reason for the leaves being alike in the fact that they are united in one organic whole. They are the same because they are all part of the same tree. And the facts of the mental world, as we perceive them, point irresistibly to a similar conclusion. Our minds receive the same impressions and record the same verdicts because they, too, are part of an organism. Our separate minds are leaves of a tree. They are fed from one source.

The backbone, then, of reality is mind. And the individual mind subsists by virtue of its relation to the Universal Mind. This does not mean that our mentality is in any complete sense a copy or expression of the Mind behind it. The leaf is not the oak. You could not, by studying a leaf, picture the oak unless you had previously seen it. Not less is the one contained in the other, and not less does the one imply the other. The essential unity of mental life as we know it, unless all the analogies and all the methods of scientific induction are false, implies a Basic Consciousness in which all individual minds find their ground, their accord, and their meaning.

The same result may be reached in another way. The outside world becomes intelligible to us solely by means of a mentality which underlies it, and which crops out of it at every point. You hold any

common thing in your hand—a pebble, a lump of chalk. Your examination of it, if it proceed scientifically, will land you at every point in a mental network. The relation of our pebble to space and time, its oneness as related to number, its colour, shape, density, all these things have meaning solely as related to perception, to a mind; they are impossible, inconceivable apart from mind. Our stone, as soon as we begin to talk of it, reveals itself as in a logical universe.

III

But this has brought us a long way. Our experience, in placing us in direct contact with a spiritual world, real, harmonious, and centring in a universal consciousness, has laid for us the foundation of religion. The next question is whether experience, of the race or of individuals, has carried us any further. Having secured us a foundation, does it offer material for a solid superstructure? Do the existing structures, or any one of them, contain such material? To narrow our question still further, is Christianity such a structure, and if it is claimed as such, in what sense do we accept it, and upon what grounds?

We shall, perhaps, in dealing with these questions, best proceed if we begin with here and now. Our own first experience of religion is the coming into what might be called a physical contact with it as it exists to-day in our own country. Here in England—and the same may be said of the Western world generally—the public is confronted with religion as, if the term may be permitted, "a going

concern." Every one of us is related to it in this first way. We see the cathedrals, the churches, the conventicles, in which its worship is carried on and its message delivered. We have read more or less of the Bible, its sacred Book. We know something of the differing creeds and articles in which its leading doctrines are summarised. We are aware of the divisions between its followers and know, perhaps, something of the causes of them.

So far we have, then, all of us a religious experience about which there can be no question. It is one common to the believer and the unbeliever alike. It is an appeal to the senses, as plain and palpable as the sun and moon. But this of itself does not amount to much. When we come to closer quarters, when we listen seriously to the Church's message, in creed or sermon, we have an experience of another kind. We find ourselves now confronted by a series of statements of a remarkable character. Christianity is here delivered to us as an elaborate doctrine concerning God, man, the world, life, death, and what is after death. God is defined in terms of a Trinity, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; there is a doctrine of salvation, of the Church, of the Sacraments, of the ministry, of the Bible and other themes of the first class. What, we have now to ask, is the relation of all this to experience? It might seem at first sight that we are here in another region of things, a region beyond and above the limits we have marked out. And this, indeed, is the position of certain theologians, who exhibit the Church's dogma as something more than experience; more universal than it, more stable and trustworthy;

the rule, indeed, by which the individual experience, full as it is of limitations and vagaries, is to be judged and corrected. There are, it is contended, truths in the dogma which transcend experience and which appeal to another standard.

But claims of this kind, when carefully examined, lead always in the end to the same conclusion. When, for instance, we are asked to believe on the authority of the dogma, the question immediately arises: "Whence does the dogma derive *its* authority?" If it be answered that its authority founds itself on that of the Church, we ask again: "Wherein lies the authority of the Church?" Or if we are pointed to the Bible the same query again emerges. And as we listen to the cry of another party, "Neither Church nor Bible is the ultimate authority; the final voice is that of Christ"; the insistent question once more offers itself: "Whence the authority of Christ?" We are at last, it seems, thrust back finally on a question of origins. We pass up through nineteen centuries of historical Christianity to its beginnings. But the moment we begin to reflect on the beginnings we discover that all the contents of Christianity—its dogma, its Church, its Bible, its Christ—resolve themselves inevitably into one question, that of experience. Let us see a little how the matter stands.

It is to be observed that the various claims we have just rehearsed really hang together. Theology, indeed, recognises this. The orthodox Church in all its branches unites in accepting Christ as the supreme authority. It unites also in regarding the Bible as the true witness concerning Christ's Person,

life and teaching. It holds dogmas as its reasoned statement of these things. So that Church, dogma, Bible and Christ are all considered as elements in a congruous system.

IV

But whence does this complex of authority derive itself? Christ is declared as supreme, as Divine, but how is that conclusion arrived at? There are two things here which Lessing, we believe, amongst modern thinkers, was the first to draw attention to—the consciousness of Christ Himself and the consciousness of His followers about Him;—His own faith concerning God and the universe, and the faith of the Church in Him. Here, we perceive, are two forms of experience: Christ's own immediate experience of life and the world, and the disciples' own experience of His personality. For the knowledge of both we have to go to the New Testament. Between Christ and ourselves stand the writers of this record. And now we come upon all the crucial questions raised at once by philosophy and criticism in relation to experience. As we study the testimony of the Gospel historians we are compelled to carry in our minds the two factors of experience of which we spoke at the beginning—namely, the outside fact and the mind which observes it.

We have pointed out the enormous contribution made by the perceiving mind to what we call our knowledge of the outside fact. That is true of all minds. What is now in addition to be remembered is the relation to experience of the quality

and training of the perceiving mind. On this depends our whole modern estimate of the value of evidence. An eclipse, as witnessed by a savage and by an astronomer, is, we say, in itself the same event, but note the impression of it on these two minds. To the one it is a miracle ; to the other it is the verification of a scientific forecast. The one prostrates himself in terror, regarding the phenomenon as manifesting the wrath of a vengeful Power. The other takes photographs, makes rapid observations, scribbles notes which are to be the bases of future calculations. These men in reporting the occurrence would be each reporting a genuine experience of the same fact. But what a difference in the mental content of the experience, and in its value as evidence for us ! As compared with the report of the scientist that of the savage would be of no value. Its only interest would consist in the view it gave of what passes, under such circumstances, in a rude, untutored mind. It is worthless as an account of celestial phenomena.

But why is the one testimony of so much more value than the other ? For answer we are thrown back on the history of experience, a chapter full of information on our special theme. We discover now that there is a race-experience, the accumulation of uncounted millions of individual ones. From this accumulation has been born in the minds of successive generations a race-consciousness which, with the ages, becomes ever richer in its contents and ever surer in its judgments. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.* The whole human race, as Pascal observed, is in this way as a single indi-

vidual ever growing and ever learning. In this common consciousness the mistakes of individual observation are one by one recognised and dropped. It is a crucible which tries everything and which, by an infallible process, rejects the dross and retains the fine gold. The race-consciousness, continually testing itself, continually adding to its treasures, is the one guide we possess, the guide whose judgment makes the nearest approach to infallibility that is possible to humanity.

V

We have now to ascertain the bearing of all this upon that New Testament record which, as we have said, stands between us and Christ. As with our eclipse so, in this greater appearance, our first question is with the witnesses. What facilities had they for observing Him; with what eyes did they view Him; what inner prepossessions went to the total make-up of their impression of Him?

Of these witnesses let us begin with the one best known to us. We could not get anywhere a better illustration of our thesis than St. Paul. He is at once authoritative and close to the fact. And his Christianity is above all things a Christianity of experience, founded on his personal consciousness. His career was moulded by what he believed to have been an immediate contact with Jesus, and he directed his course, and built up his theology —a theology destined to be that of countless millions to follow—on what that contact brought to him. His testimony, moreover, is accepted by

critics of all schools as that of a perfectly honest and singularly able man. His guarantee of *bona fides* is that he gave his whole life as a pledge. What, then, was Paul's experience of Jesus, and how far does it carry, as evidence for ourselves ?

From his own letters, and from the story in the Acts which on this point corroborates them, we learn that he had a trance or vision in which he believed he saw the crucified Jesus, and which convinced him that He, whose followers he was then engaged in persecuting, was living and energising in some sphere of the spiritual world. What the physical and other concomitants of this vision were, has been, in late years especially, the subject of many-sided and many-motived investigation. It is noted that this was not the only occurrence of the kind that the Apostle mentions. He was subject to visions and to dreams, to which he attached a crucial importance. And this has led to the criticism that regards these experiences as pathological conditions, which, so far from adding strength to his religious teaching, detract from it. Paul was, in this view, a neurotic, with an abnormal subconscious activity. He had trances similar to those of the modern medium. His vision of Christ was a piece of auto-suggestion, the result of long brooding over this one theme. It was that visualisation of an intensely excited subjective condition with which scientific hypnotists are familiar, and of which they can furnish us with innumerable parallels.

A delightfully easy solution this, according to which Christianity, traced to its source, resolves itself into an affair of medicine. A jury of doctors

have held inquest upon it and recorded their verdict in terms of pathology!

But the problem is not quite so simple. As to what lay on the other side of Paul's vision; what precisely was the objective fact contained in it, we are not, it must be confessed, in a position to know. We are here on the hither side of Reality and must accept the limitations of the position. But even from this point of view we see some things. We come now upon another phase of our philosophy of experience. Looking at the two elements we have to take into account, the outside fact and the receptive mind, we observe a point in their relation which makes a decisive factor in the final judgment. It is that of the impression made by the fact on the receiving mind regarded as a measure of its external cause. Our experience of a thunderstorm, for example, teaches us two things. Its impression on us is, for one, a revelation of our own sensitiveness. But it reveals also, not completely, yet, as far as it goes, with entire accuracy, the range and intensity of the storm itself. Could we give scientifically the entire content of our consciousness while under the impression, it would be a true register of what was happening outside. Let us now apply this to what we have immediately in hand, the Pauline experience of Christ.

His vision, we are told, is on a line with that of the modern medium. Well, we know our modern medium, his trances and performances in general. We have full details of the experiments in hypnotism, in auto and other suggestion, made of

recent years in America, France, and England. In reference to them let us apply that gauge of inner response we have just been examining. What is the response element in our medium ? We find the experiments on him producing no faintest approximation to the results which followed in St. Paul from the experience he describes. Standing where we do, and trying to judge the business as impartial spectators, our task is to measure the quality of the force operating on the Apostle's mind by the effects it produced. We do not see the force or its origin ; we are not sharers in his vision. But what we do see are its results. And they are remarkable. The vision transfigured him. It gave him a new view of the world, of himself, of Christ, and of God. And the power under which he came did not visit him as a solitary impact, but remained throughout his life as an abiding influence. It set him on a career which resulted in the founding of a host of Christian communities in Asia and Europe. It filled him with an ecstatic emotion, with an adoring love for Jesus which comes out continually in his letters and addresses. It formed the groundwork of a theology, including a morality, which has lasted nigh two thousand years. It was the starting-point of a movement which has permeated the modern world with the Christian idea, and which is running with unabated force to-day. These results, we submit to our medical jury, are not those which we see flowing from the mediumistic trance of to-day to which they point us. The explanation of the Pauline experience must, at any rate, go deeper than that.

VI

Let us in search of it come back to Paul himself. In studying what he has to say, we are driven at once to a constructive, and also to a critical attitude. He offers us material of a most remarkable kind, and which we have, before using it in our building, to sift with the utmost care. On the strength of his experience he has reared, as we have said, a theology of imposing dimensions. In this system he gives to Jesus a cosmic position as the Son of God, who died as a ransom for sinful men, who will be their future Judge, who is now the Head of the Church, ever present with it, though invisible, working in and through its members as surely as He wrought upon the Apostle himself, though, maybe, in less definite ways. In this theology he speaks with equal confidence of an invisible world and a future state, of heaven, of angels, of evil spirits, of Satan, of a speedy second coming of Christ and end of the world.

How much, we ask again, does this theology teach us as to the actual reality? There was, we have argued, a great spiritual force behind the Apostle's visions. But how far does this go as guaranteeing the accuracy of the Pauline views? Employing again our philosophy of experience, we must examine now in Paul's case the mind and its furniture on which the outside fact operated. We have noted the difference between the Hottentot and the astronomer as recipients of impressions. Where does the Apostle stand as a recipient?

Here we have to make some serious admissions. St. Paul does not observe his fact as our astronomer would observe his. He was not, in our sense, scientific. He was a child of his time and race, and shared its limitations. He had the mental consciousness of the Jew of nineteen centuries ago, and what is evident is that his new spiritual experience, whatever its value, in no degree disinherited him of that consciousness. No one, indeed, who knows anything of the history of human development would expect any such result. The world's spiritual education does not proceed that way. For its purposes men are taken as they are. They are not first stripped of their skin.

St. Paul, then, we have to recognise, brings to his fact his own peculiar way of looking at it. It is in many respects very different from our way. As we make an inventory of his mental interior we find in it some strange enough furniture; strange, that is, to the intellectual habits of our century, though not strange at all to students of the literature of his nation and period. His view, for instance, of the approaching end of the world was that of the Jewish Apocalypses of the time. His to us singular reason for the covering of women's heads in church, given in I. Cor. xi. 10, is derived from the Rabbinic view that evil spirits hovered in the neighbourhood of women, seeking to gain advantage over them. Entirely Oriental also is his conception, in the same chapter, of God as being in the form of a man rather than of a woman. Heaven is to him, as to his Jewish contemporaries, a succession of spheres overarching the earth,

arranged in ascending grades of superiority. His notions of original sin and of the Fall were also the current ideas of the time. In the fourth book of Ezra, with which he was assuredly familiar, we read: "By reason of his evil heart the first Adam fell into sin and guilt, and also all who came after him." And in Ecclesiasticus we have the statement: "From a woman was the beginning of sin, and therefore of her we all die."

When, moreover, we come to Paul's Christology we have again to examine the kind of ground on which his experience of Jesus actually fell. We are in no position for understanding or properly valuing his language here unless we know how that language came to him. When, for instance, he speaks of Jesus as the "Son of God," "the Lord," the "image of God," and so on, the instinct of the pious reader, nourished on the old traditions, is to take these expressions as coined under a direct inspiration, affirming with a Divine precision the place of Jesus in the cosmic scheme. But, as modern scholarship compels us now to recognise, this is too naïve a suggestion. The Apostle expresses himself here in terms that were already made for him, in thought-forms familiar to his contemporaries. The Messianic idea which possessed the mind of the later Judaism had in Paul's time developed into a full-grown conception of a Divine-human Mediator, God's image and representative to man. Philo of Alexandria, a contemporary of Jesus, with whose writings the Apostle may have been acquainted, is full of this idea. Thus, in his "De Monarchia," he says: "The Word by which

the world was made is the Image of the Supreme Deity." He speaks also of the Logos as "His First-Begotten Son," and as "An Intercessor between the Creator and the created." "God," he says further, "has appointed a Prince and Ransom for the soul." The Intercessor is also "The Image of God and First-Born of all intelligent creatures." On the office of the Mediator he observes: "It is necessary for a person performing his duty to the All Father to apply to His Son as to an Advocate, the most perfect in every virtue, both to have his sins forgiven and also for the obtaining of every good gift." This line of thought was, in fact, in the air; it was the mental mode of the time. It is impossible for us to study this literature and not to recognise its vital relationship to the expressions about Christ used by St. Paul and the other New Testament writers. As a recent critic, Professor Wernle, puts it: "They experienced something abnormal in Jesus, but in order to express it their own words fail them. So they turn to the Jewish categories nearest at hand and attempt to confine the indefinable within these definitions."

VII

Our inquiry, so far as it has gone, gives us, then, a witness entirely sincere, who has had a spiritual experience of the greatest kind, but who, in his report of it, uses the language of his time, and accompanies the report with ideas which express his mental limitations. Let us carry the investigation a point further. In St. Paul's testimony of

Christ one of the leading features is the account he gives of His death. The Pauline theology may be said, in fact, to centre in the cross. In studying his letters one might suppose that he was ignorant of the details of Christ's career, or that he regarded them as unimportant. His whole teaching concentrates itself upon Christ as the crucified, as having risen again and entered into the spiritual world, and on the relations of all this to the problems of sin and salvation. Here, again, in asking ourselves as to the validity for us of this testimony, we are thrown back on Paul's personal experience in these matters and on the question as to what precisely it was worth. How was it that the death of Jesus so affected him ; that he saw it in this light ; that he came to build this theology upon it ? He had not been a witness of the event himself. To him, as to us, it was in itself a bare fact in history.

From whatever standpoint we regard the Crucifixion it remains as the miracle of miracles that, occurring as it did, it should have produced the effect it did. The amazing feature of it is that, accepted by all the Churches as the basis of their theology, the participators in the tragedy, the witnesses of it, including the disciples themselves, never suspected there was any theology in it at all ! All these people, Annas and Caiaphas, Pilate, the Scribes and Pharisees who had assisted at the trial, down to the Roman soldiers and the Jerusalem mob who enjoyed themselves at the spectacle, had, indeed, their own theology, but they saw none of it here. They believed most of them in a Deity who could be propitiated by sacrifices. But here

was no offering to Deity. Jesus was simply a prisoner condemned by the authorities. It never occurred to them that His death was a sacrifice; it was an execution.

How, then, was the miracle wrought? How came it that this bloody death, in the mind of the Apostle and of the early Christians, assumed the significance which they gave to it? We must seek the answer in a fresh examination of the mental ground on which the great fact fell. In studying the Apostle's mind here the key to its workings on this theme is found in the fact that he was a Jew. He had been brought up in a religion of sacrifices, of propitiatory offerings. The temple at Jerusalem was standing during his lifetime and its altars daily reeked with the blood of victims. His mind, like that of his contemporaries, was full of these early-world conceptions, and they were bound to give their own colour to any new factors that entered his consciousness. When, then, the great experience came to him on the Damascus road, an experience which assured him that the Crucified lived and was potent in the spiritual world, his interpretation was bound to follow the line which his mental training opened.

In dwelling on this theme his thought took one of those forward leaps which mark the great stages in the world's spiritual evolution. In this one mind an age's accumulation of human experiences had flashed into a new synthesis. Jesus had died under the law, a victim to Judaism, to that system whose animal sacrifices, ritual requirements, and dull round of observances had already filled this eager soul

with such a sense of futility and of spiritual barren ness. And it now came to him that Jesus, the victim of this system, had at the same time conquered it. His suffering had carried the whole conception of law, of penalty, of sacrifice into a new plane. Evolution, as a formulated doctrine, was as yet ages before its time, but what passed in the apostle's mind here was an inspiration that followed the true line of evolution. In the ascent of life, which the doctrine of development teaches, the higher form that has just emerged contains all the lower forms in a transfigured way. It was this transfiguration of the lower idea of sacrifice contained in Judaism which Paul now saw in the death of Christ. It is impossible for us to enter fully into the apostle's feeling here, because we have not had his foregoing experience of Judaism. For a parallel we have to go to Luther and the Reformation. We are quite unable to understand the enthusiasm of the first reformers for the doctrine of justification by faith until we have realised the yoke of heavy and utterly futile observances from which it was a deliverance. The same may be said of St. Paul and his doctrine of the Cross.

Paul delights himself henceforth in pouring out in his letters and addresses his hoarded Jewish lore, and to show in Christianity its glorious new application. He has reached the upper side of that sacrificial system which before had so plagued him. Much of the lore which serves this new office was, it is true, pure Rabbinism, touched with the defects of the system. At some of his expositions we are inclined to smile, and the world-view in which

he places his thought has been largely superseded. Not the less is the position which he takes on the death of Christ a revelation. It is so in the true scientific meaning of that term. For it was the dawn in his spirit, at the appointed time, of a new truth in the sphere of religion ; a fresh step in the ascent of life on its inner side. As much as the emergence of man from the anthropoid apes marked a step upwards in the scale of being, so did this conception of the dying Jesus, as the ultimate and eternal sacrifice, the consecration for ever of the principle of sacrifice—as a love-offering and a love-suffering in the service of the world—mark a stage forward in the spiritual evolution.

We are now in a position to pronounce with some degree of clearness upon this whole Pauline experience, regarded as evidence for ourselves. It amounts, we perceive, in relation to the personality of Jesus to something much less rigidly defined, to something vastly more human, vastly closer to life as we know it, than the theological formularies have made out. We understand a good deal better the significance of the titles and ascriptions Paul applies to Christ when we see how he came by them. He has, we find, translated here the immense impression made on him by his personal experience of Jesus in phrases current at the time. But the inquiry which yields these results in no degree invalidates his testimony as to the uniqueness of Christ, and His claim to love and devotion. Jesus is not the less divinely inspiring for us that we find ourselves less able than before to draw His boundary lines.

VIII

Thus much of the Pauline experience. We have next to note its relation to what else is given us in the New Testament. Paul's picture of Jesus is stamped everywhere with the character of his own personality. But in the main points it is marvellously in accord with what else we find in the record. The Gospels, like the Epistles, are the reflection of an experience. And the reflection again is shaped largely by the quality of the mirror. The informants who offer to us the facts of Christ's life are here also unscientific observers. They carry in their eye a world of things which stood between them and the bare fact. Signs and wonders pour into their narratives because their minds, like those of their contemporaries, are a wonder-factory. They have no such sense of the uniformity of nature as fills the modern chronicler. Their mental condition is nearer that of the good Chinese Buddhist, Hiouen Thsang, who, in his journey to India, records of Buddha's footprint that "it seems of more or less size according to the greater or less faith of the beholder."

In studying these records, too, we have to remember that the earliest of them was put together, in the form we have it, more than a generation after the death of Jesus. That, as history shows us, was a period long enough for a certain development of myth and legend. To take a parallel instance, that of the extant biographies of Francis of Assisi. The accounts of his contemporaries, such as the *Speculum Perfectionis* of Frater Leo, contain some

things sufficiently astonishing. But in the generation immediately following, imagination had given itself fuller scope. The Life of Francis by Bonaventura, written at an interval not greater than that between the death of Jesus and the publication of Mark's Gospel, is stuffed with the incredible. A yet more striking illustration, because so much nearer our own time, is that afforded by the story of the Babist sect of Persia. The Bab was Ali Mohammed, a seer of Shiraz, who was regarded by his followers as a kind of Mohammedan Messiah. He was put to death by the Persian authorities in 1850, at the age of thirty. The first account of him, a contemporary one, was written by Merza Jani, who was himself executed in 1852. Then came another "Life," a generation later, in 1880 that is, by two disciples. When we compare this new history with the earlier one, we have an illustration made under our very eyes of the natural history of legend in an Eastern country. This last account is full of miracles. There is, for instance, a narrative of the seer's transfiguration in 1846 on a ride from Shiraz to Teheran. And yet this "history" was written within the lifetime of the prophet's widow.

Considerations of this kind are such as the modern inquirer finds it impossible to ignore in studying the Gospel records. Christ as a reality is the fact he wants to get at. In his quest he comes upon these reflections of Him, and he is bound to ask himself how much belongs to the objective fact, and how much to the mirror itself?

We have nothing direct from Christ Himself.

He was not a writer of books or even of letters. With the exception of the doubtful epistle to the King of Edessa, there is no published thing from His hand. We do not even know what He was like. The race He belonged to had no taste for the arts, and so, while we are familiar with the features of Rameses and of Cæsar, we have no authentic statue or picture of Christ. The early fathers who venture descriptions of His personal appearance are evidently drawing on their imagination. They are hopelessly contradictory. Christ left no material trace of Himself on His native land. Sir Christopher Wren is, as it were, visible to us in his great stone mountain on Ludgate Hill. The dome of St. Peter's, the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel are the perpetual reminders of Michel Angelo. The Egyptian kings live on in their pyramids. But Jesus left no trace. He built nothing. The traveller in Palestine finds a stony wilderness, a country at the farthest rear of civilisation, in the grasp of an alien faith.

What, then, to-day do we actually possess on which to found our knowledge of Jesus? After the survey we have been making of the ground; after recognising the various elements which enter into experience and their differing value; after allowing for the mental limitations of the writers of our Gospels; after accepting the possible introduction into their narratives of myth and legend, what of actuality remains? Has Christ under this process ceased to be for us a reality? Or, admitted as historic, does He sink to a position inferior to that which the Church has hitherto assigned Him?

We see no likelihood of any such eclipse. For the philosophy of experience, which compels us to such seeming severities on the negative side, is not less decisive on its affirmative. We have already spoken of the element of response as a criterion of truth. Our register of an outside fact is the feeling it excites in us. Whether the outside fact be a thunderstorm or an historic personage, the truth about them is wrapped up in the consciousness they produce in us, if only we can accurately analyse that consciousness. We have, indeed, no other way of getting at our fact. With this in mind, as we study our New Testament, we realise Jesus as not so much in it as behind it. When Vesuvius hurls its million tons of material into the air, what holds us as we view the spectacle is not so much the visible phenomenon as the thought of the force beneath. In studying the Gospels and Epistles we have a similar feeling. What, we ask, is the power that produced all this? For when all the exaggerations have been discounted there remains one element here whose accuracy cannot be questioned. It is the element of response. The book throughout is the expression of an immense emotion, which we have to explain. When we have finished our analysis of the language and thought-forms in which the evangelists describe Jesus it still remains that this is the language which expressed their feeling; which expressed the love, the wonder, the awe with which His personality filled them. What we cannot doubt is that they are trying here to offer us a sense of a great and wondrous mystery that had come into

their lives. The One they write about had made on them the impression of something great, pure, celestially beautiful, that had opened new horizons to the soul. But by the dynamic law we are considering it follows that the impression on their side argued a corresponding power on the other. From the study of the New Testament, considered as a recital of experience, we are led irresistibly to the conception of a spiritual force behind it which it is no abuse of language to call Divine.

IX

It has been the misfortune of theology that age after age it has been so eagerly engaged in mapping out the limits and boundaries of the Divine element in Jesus. In the process theology has injured its eyesight, like observers who gaze too fixedly on the sun. The usefulness of the sun is disclosed to us not by looking at it but by working in its light. The original Christianity, that which lived in the bosom of Jesus, which consisted of His own direct experience of God, life and the world, is like the solar centre, hidden from us. We know it only by the burning heat which has radiated from it. Men will easily accept the Incarnation if only we will refrain from definitions of it. When Beyschlag declares for the purely human consciousness of Jesus; when Ritschl finds here "the religious value of God," God, that is, revealed along the lines of spirit, will and love; when Theodore of Mopsuestia, one of the sanest minds in the whole catalogue of the Fathers, sees "the human spirit of

Jesus so perfectly appropriating the Divine as to become entirely one with it"; we recognise the honesty, and in a certain degree the value of these appraisements.

Not the less do they make us realise that the religion of experience gains little from these definitions. We know Christ's nature best by the response it has created in others. And here we come upon a great extension of our theme. For our knowledge of Christ as a knowledge mediated through human hearts does not end in the New Testament records. It emerges from them into the vaster sphere of the world and of the ages. And this region we find to be one not only so much wider than the first but where we find ourselves on so much surer ground. It is not here a question of historical detail, where it is so easy to be mistaken, but of those psychological facts, those contents of the human consciousness which come nearest of all to our conception of reality. We deal here not with the accidents of time and place, but with the working of the inner laws, with the impact of spiritual forces on the soul.

What are the facts here? As we survey the course of history in the centuries that have followed the Christian beginnings, we find ourselves everywhere in the presence of a new world-power. We have to study here the significance of Jesus not simply as He is given us in the Gospels, but as we find Him wrought into the warp and woof of innumerable saintly souls. We have the Christ actualised in a Perpetua, an Augustine, a Bernard, a Wiclif, a Fletcher of Madeley, a Chalmers of New

Guinea. The Bollandist collection of "Lives of the Saints" fills fifty-five volumes and deals with twenty-five thousand lives. But these are the merest fraction of the whole. One of the surest things we know is that during these last twenty centuries there has been rolling over the world a stream of spiritual life, which has flowed in upon generation after generation of men, producing in them, amid all varieties of temperament, education and environment, a certain moral result. It has been a result of inner quickening, of a new refinement of feeling, of philanthropic passion, of an ardour of self-sacrificing love for the unfortunate and the outcast. There is no doubt about these facts, and the question is as to their explanation. There are no effects without causes. The stream does not rise above its source. Is there any explanation which better fits all the facts than that which St. Paul and the New Testament everywhere give, of a Power behind the scenes, personal, related to humanity, yet spiritual and immortal?

X

Let us consider these last terms for a moment. Christianity is the religion of a human life and death, with the sequel of the invisible action of a vast *post-mortem* power. This power was in its operation moral and spiritual. But morality and spirituality are qualities of persons. They suppose personality and are inconceivable without it. It is time we gave up being afraid of this term in a cosmic connection, as though it were

unscientific. The cry of "anthropomorphism" as applied to an unseen personality is surely by this time out of date. When we are told that this is a mere projection of ourselves into the sphere of causes, we reply that there is no theory of the universe possible to us which does not lie open to the same criticism. If we adopt the barest materialism and speak only of matter and force, we are still entirely anthropomorphic. For the idea of force, as much as the idea of will or of intelligence, is derived entirely from our own consciousness. Why, we repeat, should we be afraid of personality in our conception of the world-process? So far as we can see, personality is the beginning and the end of things. It is the one thing towards which nature incessantly strives. It is the one interesting thing. As Bradley, in his "Appearance and Reality," puts it: "Outside of spirit there is not, and there cannot be, any reality; and the more anything is spiritual so much the more is it veritably real." There could be no use in a universe which did not know itself. The seas, the mountains, the cosmic forces, time, eternity, are significant only to an eye that sees, to an intelligence that understands.

The New Testament writers, then, in ascribing personality to the power which influenced them, were so far assuredly within the limits of sound thinking. Their further assurance that this personal power was that of their Master, who had survived death and was operating on them from some invisible sphere, is, of course, more positive, and open to criticism of another kind. But there is no *a priori* impossibility. What we know of life, still more

what we do not know, makes it absurd to place this supposition among the inconceivables. The survival of personality, in its commonest forms, is to-day being made the subject of a scientific investigation which is accumulating a vast and ever-increasing body of evidence. Men are ceasing to deny *post-mortem* influences. They are, instead, constructing a philosophy of them. When, to this general impression, we add, as evidence of the continued and exalted life of Jesus, the whole body of experiences we have here been considering, the entire result of it, upon some of us at least, is one which no criticism of details, no argument from the mental limitations of the recipients can weaken, far less destroy.

Thus far, then, does experience seem to carry us as a witness of religion, and of Christianity as its highest expression. We can see now what it has, and what it has not, procured us. The New Testament is a record of human experiences. In them, in their character and intensity, we have to seek our register of the forces that lie behind. They offer us no cut-and-dried theory of the Infinite, nor of its relation to the finite. The word "Trinity," which Tertullian introduced to Christian theology, was, like some other of his contributions, a very doubtful asset to the Church. We are better without it; better, for our knowledge of this theme, with the primitive emotions of Evangelists and Apostles, and with the phrases in which they seek to express them. Placed as we are in the scale of being, we look through too small an aperture to be able to take in the scheme as a whole. We do

not know the absolute as such. Our knowledge is relative. We do not know how personality is related to the ultimate Real. All we know is that it is there. As the blue heaven above us yields its cloud, born of itself, and by-and-by to be re-absorbed into its infinitude, so does the Abyss of Being, in whom all things are, yield its personality, filled and penetrated with its own essence. The All, to be the All, must contain personality. It must express itself by personality. That is as far as we can see on the upper side.

On the lower, that of history, we have the records we have been trying to analyse. We have Jesus, living His life in Galilee, dying at Jerusalem, and leaving on His disciples the impressions we have discussed. After that we have further experiences, the first-hand testimony of St. Paul, and that other evidence, accumulating through the following centuries, of spiritual energies operating on innumerable souls. As to these energies there is no question. Their uplift is realised every day by Christian men. In yielding themselves joyously to these powers; in carrying out, with their reinforcement, the laws of love, of service, and of sacrifice; in projecting their thought and hope onward to a future life, where their being will find completion; in a word, in holding on to the essence of New Testament religion they know themselves on sure ground. And that in face of all that modern science and philosophy have to say. For along every inch of the way the ground is that not of abstract theories or *a priori* speculation, but of the evidence which alone convincingly appeals to

us, the evidence of the actual impressions of the mind in contact with outside facts. When we have sifted these impressions, weighed them in the scales of the modern world-consciousness, corrected them by our latest and surest apparatus of science and criticism, we have on the religious side the nearest approach to ultimate truth that in this world is open to us. It is on this ground the instructed Christian of to-day claims to stand. His religion becomes thus, in the best sense, a religion of experience.

Having examined in this way the findings of experience in Christianity considered as a whole, we shall now, in succeeding chapters, endeavour to discover what experience has to say in the application of the Christian idea to some of the problems of modern life.

I

Our New Senses

THE best proof of evolution is the fact that we are evolving. The work is going on before our eyes. The thing that was not is there visibly coming into being. In human nature and human history we perceive the slow emergence of new forms of power, glimmerings of vast possibilities yet to be realised. Man is in the making, the greatest part of him still to come. Behind is the boundless, inexhaustible ocean of being. We have to measure *that* before we can measure the man that is to be.

The movement is a slow one, for, as Herbert Spencer points out, "the higher the organisms the longer they take to evolve." In certain directions, indeed, there are retardations and retrogressions. Civilisation has played havoc with some of our faculties. Horology has destroyed our sense of time. Roads and sign-posts have robbed us of the instinct of the savage by which he finds his way unerringly across hundreds of miles of trackless forest. We neither see, nor hear, nor smell with the quickness and accuracy of the man of the woods. Even in the direction of the higher arts we appear to have lost some things. The execution

of a certain Etruscan brooch, representing three bees poised on a flower, could not be successfully copied by modern Parisian experts, in spite of repeated attempts. The Egyptians had a secret of colours that are as brilliant to-day as four thousand years ago. In that time our aniline dyes would have absolutely disappeared.

But these are details that do not affect the main result. Even in the matter of the senses civilisation has given more than it has taken away. In the telescope, the microscope, the spectroscope, and a score of other instruments, man has reinforced his eyesight and other senses to a degree which the savage cannot even comprehend. His steam-engine, his motor-car, carry him faster than the swiftest brave can run. One may say that the mind of the modern man has constructed for him a series of outside senses which augment a hundredfold the force of his physical organs. The Indian with his ear to the ground could catch the crackle of a leaf, the beat of a horsehoof at a distance which seems incredible to the untrained townsman. But the townsman, in return, putting his ear to a telephone receiver, listens to a message across a space which transcends the Indian's faculty as hopelessly as the express train beats him in speed. We may say that the upward movement has endowed us with a new sense apparatus.

But it is not along these lines specially that we are now thinking. It is to the evolution of what may be called certain internal senses that we ask our readers' attention. As we survey history and literature, and note the way of thinking and feeling

of our fellows ages ago, we discern at once a difference so great that it points to the emergence in the mind of at least the germs of new faculties. The mind of man, we perceive, is steadily being remade. Let us point out in one or two directions what precisely we mean.

There has, then, to begin with, come to the modern consciousness a faculty we fail to discern earlier, in the shape of what is frequently called "the historical sense." By that we mean the power of realising the past exactly as it was, of placing bygone ages in the dry light of actuality, of cutting clean through the enormous and fantastic structures which the human imagination has constructed round certain events, and reaching the bare, simple fact. To appreciate the essential modernness of this faculty, its entire absence from the ablest minds of a not remote past, we have only to consult the historical records of the times before our own. One might, indeed, go beyond history—to art, for instance. The mediæval, and even the Renaissance, painters were quite without the historical sense. They had no feeling for actuality. The "Christ in the Pharisee's House" of Paul Veronese, a splendid piece of work so far as colour and drawing are concerned, is, as to its historic setting, a banquet of the middle ages rather than of the first century in Palestine. The treatment would be as impossible to the modern painter as would be Bonaventura's handling of the life of St. Francis to M. Paul Sabatier.

It is to the appearance and steady growth of this new faculty that we may look for changes of the

vastest consequence in the domain of man's relations with the past, in the domain, that is to say, of history and religion. The earlier mind could not see clearly if it would. The medium in which it worked was so charged with preconceptions, with unscientific views of the universe, that it had no means of reaching the actual fact. It was like searching for a needle in a London fog. There were no rules or instruments of accurate research; no sense, indeed, of the paramount value of accuracy. The happenings of past times were seen by their recorders on the background of a universe in which any and every monstrosity was possible; the more monstrous the more possible. This attitude of mind was, we have to remember, that of all the classical writers, of all the early Christian writers, of all the mediæval writers, and of all the theological writers up to a very late date indeed. So little did they regard accuracy, that forgery in what seemed a good cause was deemed a pious exercise. The writers of the "Acts of Paul and Thecla," of the "Gospel of Peter," and similar productions never imagined that the false use of an Apostle's name was morally, not to say historically condemnable. Their mental condition was also that of the Church Fathers, whose miracle stories were so mercilessly exposed by Middleton in his famous "Inquiry." It is, we say, a new mental development which compels the modern mind, in contrast with all this, to judge of the occurrences of the first century by the occurrences of our own; and to be perfectly sure that nothing happened in Judæa at that or any other time that might not happen in London

or New York in our own. We are only beginning dimly to recognise the changes in our thought-world that the rise and operation of this faculty will accomplish. We see enough, however, to be aware that it will make all things new.

Another of the higher senses, whose operation, in its present form, constitutes a new evolution, is that of universal sympathy. The idea of regarding the whole human family as the subject of friendly regards, as essentially one with us, and that independently of race, creed or colour, is, as regards average men, practically an acquisition of our time. The great world teachers, Jesus, Gautama, Confucius, possessed it, but for ages it was absent from the common brain. Legislators, statesmen, theologians constructed their systems as though unaware of its existence. *Qui Deum amat, amat omnes*, says Leibnitz, but as a matter of fact it has not been so. There have been innumerable sincere lovers of God who have had no such feeling for their fellow-men as that which now is everywhere gaining ground. With what complacency Plato and Aristotle base their ideal state on slavery! And Cicero is convinced, as he tells us in the *De Officiis*, that "it is not contrary to nature to despoil, if you can, him whom it is a virtue to slay." The most cultivated minds of classic antiquity could not conceive of the outsider other than as an enemy. Theology, for long ages, did not improve matters in this respect. Its doctrine of election, which carried the savage tribal hatred into its conceptions of the Divine government, was the emphatic denial of human solidarity. Augustine's "City of God"

is founded on the notion of two species of men, the blessed and the accursed. At the Reformation, and for long after, Protestants and Catholics regarded each other as dogs and reprobates, to whom no quarter was to be shown in this world or the next. John Knox recommended the burning of Bonner; Calvin advised the Protector Somerset "to punish well with the sword Catholics and fanatic Gospellers." The saintly Fénelon approved the infamous Dragonnades of Louis XIV. All this is impossible to the modern mind. The brain of humanity has risen to the height of an entirely new view. It is conscious of a fresh inner sense, the sense of the human oneness. It has acquired a kind of X-ray which, penetrating beneath the material envelopes of sects and creeds, discovers the one universal soul; a soul that suffers, grows, aspires, in one common movement and effort. This sense will also, like the other, work enormous changes. It will have nothing to do with any gospel that is not a gospel of the whole striving brotherhood. It will have nothing to do with Imperialisms that point their edge against other peoples. It will have nothing to do with election doctrines that leave other men out. It cannot think of a God that is less kind than itself.

There remains the greatest of all man's higher senses, his sense of the spiritual. We cannot, in one way, speak of that as a new sense. One would call it the oldest in existence. Assuredly what it stands for is the oldest thing in the universe. And yet, as related to human life as a whole, it may still be regarded as the youngest of the faculties. Man's

animal nature is old almost as the world. It derives from all the million years of our planet's animal story. Compared with this his spiritual quality is indeed a late arrival. It is as yet a mere streak on the top of his nature, a babe new-born amid the ferocious tribe of his animalities. But the babe has all the future before it. That streak of dawn means a long and splendid day to come. Goethe's "*Die Geisterwelt ist nicht verschlossen*" is the greatest thing that can be uttered about man. The religious feeling, that baffling mystery to the psychologist; with its mystic exaltations, with its attendant phenomena of dream, of vision, of psychic forces; with its stupendous moral driving power, with its possibilities of all that is exquisite in feeling; with its hints of unimaginable acquisitions yet to be realised; the religious feeling, we say, is of all the senses of man's inner nature the one that carries in it the richest promise.

A supremely important question remains. What is the mode of development of our higher senses? The whole scientific teaching here points one way. We develop by effort, by struggle. It is under strain and pressure that the organism evolves. Anyone who realises that simple fact should see in it an all-sufficient reason for the arduous, the strenuous life. And that to its very close. The law which bids us "scorn delights and live laborious days," which assures us that

> Mortals miss
> Fair prospects by a level bliss,

is the very central law of life. To preserve our faculties at their topmost level by constant work;

to abhor and keep from the ruts of luxurious ease; to welcome the opportunity of sacrifice, the doing of things that crucify the flesh; to maintain in every department the strict subordination of lower to higher, of animal to spiritual—this we are coming now to recognise is not only the teaching of the New Testament Gospel; it is seen by science to be the one and only way upward.

II

The Psychology of Prayer

"As an alienist, and one whose whole life has been concerned with the sufferings of the mind, I would state that of all the hygienic measures to counteract disturbed sleep, depression of spirits, and all the miserable sequels of a distressed mind, I would undoubtedly give the first place to the simple habit of prayer." To this effect spoke Dr. Hyslop, the distinguished specialist, to his medical brethren at a recent Congress. The utterance is noteworthy, both for the words themselves and the audience to which they were addressed. Of all men in the world, the average Englishman is the most reticent on the subject of religion. One might suppose it had never been properly acclimatised with him. He wears it awkwardly, as though it were a misfit. To ask him for an expression of it is to produce on him the effect of an indecent exposure. And the medical faculty has shared to the full this insular singularity of ours. Doctors have been supposed, indeed, to be specially inclined to scepticism. "*Tres medici duo athei*" is a hackneyed proverb, and still current. The deliverance we have quoted, calmly offered to this specialist audience as a

scientific observation resulting from experience, is then, we say, a notable fact, worthy our best consideration.

It reveals, for one thing, that new attitude towards religion which prescient minds already discern as the note of the coming age. We have remarked on the awkwardness of English religion. That is the result of its having been so largely a convention, an artificiality with which we have had no proper relations. But this is already, in the best minds, passing away. We are on the way to naturalness because we are on the way to humanness. Science is the new religious mediator. It is entering this great region of the human consciousness as a realm whose facts and experiences demand its closest investigation. It is beginning to realise the absurdity and mischief of its previous shyness in relation to them. And thus it will come about that what has been previously held as the exclusive property of theologians, to be dealt with in a jargon of their own by the pulpit and the "religious world," will be recognised once more as a common property, a recognised part of the inalienable human possession.

We treat Dr. Hyslop's declaration on prayer as a sign of this new attitude. He discusses prayer, not theologically, but as a phase of consciousness, a recognised activity of the human spirit. That is the new way. Our fathers started their religious explorations from a standpoint in the heavens, attainable only in their imagination. Hence a system handed down to us which we feel to be saturated with unrealities. We are to-day building

on surer ground. We commence with ourselves, with the things we know and feel. It is from this standpoint we can best discuss prayer. And dealing with it thus, we see how far we have travelled from the mid-Victorian position, when Tyndall and Huxley threw down their challenge to the Church to experiment about the efficacy of prayer in a hospital ward. So far have we travelled that science can no longer think on those lines. It has been forced off them on to a new track. Let us see, in one or two directions, how the matter now stands.

There is, first of all, the old *a priori* philosophical objection to prayer. It used to be argued as absurd to suppose that the mere wish of a man, as expressed in devotion, should cause any deviation in the settled order of the universe. The eternal law to be turned aside by a wish! The infinite wisdom which foresees all to take orders from a suppliant who foresees nothing! Is not this for the fly on the wheel to govern the machinery; for Phaethon to take in hand once more the chariot of the sun? It is curious to note how these ideas seem still to obsess a certain order of mind. The present writer has been frequently asked by correspondents whether, in view of such considerations as these, he can possibly himself believe in prayer.

But the new science does not reason in this way at all. For one thing, it is giving up *a priori* speculations as to what is and what is not possible. And that especially in the relations between the finite and the Infinite. For here we can pile up by the score absolute contradictions that are yet facts. We can prove motion impossible, and yet

we know things move. We argue a philosophic necessity, and yet act on the supposition that our will is free. The latest science is coming back to an absolutely homogeneous something as the ultimate beginning, and yet declaring this homogeneous something to be the cause of all variety! We have to accept these seeming contraries, and to recognise at the start that our mind is not on a scale for estimating truly the relation of the finite to the Infinite.

But that is only the beginning. The argument against prayer based on the distance between God and man is really to-day out of date. We suspect now that these two are more nearly related than we thought. Modern philosophy, especially since Hegel, has regarded man as the chief mode, on this planet, of the Divine consciousness. It is in the human soul that the Divine thought, immanent in the universe, comes to its self-expression. It is thus that the modern mind thinks of the Incarnation. Humanity itself is an incarnation. As Augustine has it, when we dig deep enough into the human we find the Divine.

When we come, therefore, with these considerations in mind, to our question—"Can a frail mortal influence by his prayer the Eternal Power?" we are at another standpoint for discussing it. The question, we discover, is, "How much in prayer is of the frail mortal," and how much of "the Eternal Power"? And in this argument also, let it be noted, it is prayer in its truest expression, and not in its imperfect forms, that is in question. As Aristotle has taught us, our judgment of a

thing is to be formed, not from its beginnings or its history, but from the perfect idea of it which the beginning and the history are labouring to exhibit. Nature always begins her creations low down. And prayer, considered historically, begins low enough. But the beginning is not the end. To decide on it from a study of savage incantations, of pagan priests with their "O Baal, hear us!", of Tartar prayer-wheels, of the naïve proposals of some modern religionists to make God the accomplice of their selfish schemes, is to go beside the mark. Yet even these, at their lowest, rightly considered, carry the great argument and justification of prayer. For they represent man's mysterious right, felt as a right at the inmost of him, to appeal from the visible to the invisible. These crudest forms are, after all, a natural movement of the soul, an instinct born of our nature and of our position in the scheme of things; an instinct to which we feel the universe has provided adequate response.

And when we trace this movement upward to its higher manifestations, the more certain do we become of its entire appropriateness, and of its marvellous inner efficacy. We realise in these experiences the fulfilment of that law, that wherever you challenge the higher possibilities of the universe it reacts upon you with entire generosity. Prayer is in this sense the exercise of the soul's responsiveness, of its receptivity. It follows here with precision the whole process of human development. Man has grown in all his departments of living by this method. It is the method of preparing himself for the action on him of outside forces. Light,

heat, electricity, the chemical actions and reactions, all these were in his world from the beginning, waiting for his appropriation. The savage was savage because of his lack of response to them. As his receptive surface became widened by knowledge, he took in of these waiting powers, until now they are his workers of miracles. Prayer, on precisely the same lines, is the appeal to subtler forces even than these. It is a receptiveness on an even grander scale. It recognises, as Clifford Harrison in his "Notes on the Margins" has excellently put it, that "if waves of force pass through earth and rock; if certain forms of light pass through our bodies . . . it may well be that psychic and mental force can be and is transmitted and exercised in a hundred unknown and mysterious, but absolutely natural ways in the unrecognised ether of thought."

To put it broadly, prayer on the human side is man's declared alliance with the Infinite. It is the sap in us, all the warm life-current in us, rising past every intermediate object of desire to our very topmost, and thence streaming out to meet that higher Beyond of which it knows itself a part. For we know ourselves not as a finished product, but as rather a process, a becoming, and in prayer we seek the element which is making us. It is in this conception we finally meet the objection, absurd in itself, of prayer being the dictation of weakness and ignorance to the all-governing wisdom. The objection ignores the whole system of things in this world. It supposes that man's prayer begins with man, whereas nothing in man

begins with him. It began first in his universe, in his Maker. It is as the action of sun and rain. From out of the ocean the sun draws up the vapours, which later come back in showers upon the earth. Here is a circulation from deep to height, and from height again to deep. So, under the shining of the Sun behind the sun, out of the deeps of man's mind and heart are carried up the invisible currents of his aspiration and soul's desire, to descend afterwards in secret responses which he knows, nevertheless, to be real. Real, though the first form of his desire is often enough left unanswered. The response lies, indeed, often enough in the heightening and purification of his desire. In Gethsemane's agony he prays, maybe, for his cup to pass from him. He leaves the garden with no other wish than that God's will be done.

Apart, then, entirely from considerations of technical theology, prayer will come more and more to be recognised as an indubitable spiritual experience, as a moral force of the first quality. It is indispensable to the man who would deal with and judge men and things from the highest plane. Its reactions on the human spirit and in the world of affairs are, indeed, incalculable. For this reason alone it is time that science took up, as it has not yet attempted to do, the whole literature of prayer—took it up as a unique study of the soul in the greatest of its manifestations. There is no literature on the whole so wonderful. Who wants man at his highest cannot leave this page unturned. It would be an entirely new sensation for our generation to leave the latest novel, and to take a turn instead

at the world's devotional record. We should not pronounce on this subject until we know what men before us have accomplished in it; until we know our Augustine, our Francis, our Luther, our St. Teresa, our Madame Guyon, our Andrewes and Wilson, our Methodist Bramwell, our Romanist Vianney.

We cannot come into contact with these great spirits without realising that, apart from their varying opinions on speculative points, they were in their prayers on the common ground of a great spiritual reality. What may be the precise relation of our nature to that unseen side of things to which in prayer it appeals, we may not accurately know. But this we are assured of, that the response from that other side is immense. Under certain inspirations the giants of faith have asked and received, because the asking and the receiving were alike of God. It is in this region the heroes have found their strength. Gordon in his tent here won his battles beforehand. Here the common man conquers himself and the world. *Fides impetrat quæ lex imperat.* "Faith obtains what the law enjoins."

There are all kinds of prayer. Much of it in a well-attuned man is a joyful acquiescence. As Coleridge has it:

> No wish conceived, no thought expressed,
> Only a sense of supplication,
> A sense o'er all my soul impressed
> That I am weak, yet not unblessed
> Since in me, round me, everywhere,
> Eternal strength and wisdom are.

But a man in healthy contact with the unseen will not be content with that. To such, as a

mediæval mystic puts it, "seeking is as good as beholding." There arises in us a sense of intimacy in which, as Marie Bashkirtseff daringly puts it, we find "a God from whom we can ask everything, and to whom we can tell everything." We may go even further and say, as did Fenelon to an inquirer, "*Si Dieu vous ennuie, dites lui qu'il vous ennuie.*" That is the highest intimacy.

In sum. Religion will come back to its true place when it is put once more on a natural basis. We discover that basis in the study of the soul's nature and powers. Chief among those powers is prayer, the faculty by which man expresses his affinity with the Unseen. In the exercise of it he widens immeasurably his relations with the Universe, and increases beyond all reckoning the sum of his inner resource.

III

The Religion of Calamity

Perhaps the most immediate effect of the San Francisco disaster was the shock it gave to men's religious convictions. Good Christian people asked the most startling questions. The event indeed seemed to have no ascertainable connection with orthodoxy. Nature was here acting with a savagery more brutal than that of the greatest savage we know. The Hottentot, the Australian bushman, has a heart and conscience of some sort, but people see no heart or conscience in this wreckage. Could there be any approximation to feeling, to love as we know it, in a Power which murdered and destroyed in such fashion? Moreover, could men continue to regard themselves as of any serious account in a universe which treated them thus; which paid seemingly as much attention to their tears and prayers as to the buzz of summer flies? In those hours of horror man rushed everywhere to help his brother, but there seemed no help outside man.

> The sky which noticed all makes no disclosure,
> And the earth keeps up her terrible composure.

This apparent cosmic indifference to human welfare is the feature of life which, perhaps, more than any

other, has impressed itself on the modern consciousness. "There is no justice in the outside universe," says a modern writer; "justice exists only in the soul." A German poet of to-day echoes the sentiment:

> Das ganze Weltall zeigt nur Leid und Pein;
> Jedoch das Mitleid fühlt der Mensch allein!

"The whole world shows but sorrow and pain, but compassion is felt by man alone."

The questions that are here raised are of course not new. They are as old as the world. Man's earliest experiences were not of a nature to teach him an easy optimism. What happened to himself and his neighbour was indeed, at times, of a character to excite his worst fears. As soon as he began to think he seems to have framed two hypotheses about his position: one, that he was the sport of blind chance or fate; the other, that he was in the hands of invisible beings as cruel as himself, but a great deal more powerful, and whom he must propitiate by all available means. The latter is evidently the older of the two beliefs. Primitive man personalised everything. Thunder and lightning, earthquake, flood, were the signs of somebody's anger. Early world religion was accordingly largely a religion of calamity. Its grand stimulant was fear. "*Timor fecit deos.*" Livy's remark that it is more natural for man to be impressed by his catastrophes than by his prosperities is here strictly appropriate. Terror goes deeper than joy, and it was terror that reared the altars. Plutarch seems to mean this in his remark that "man's attention, especially in what concerns the worship

of the gods, is seldom fixed but by a sort of violence and constraint." And it is the great argument of Lucretius, in his attack upon the current beliefs, that in ridding themselves of religion men would be freed from the terrors which made cowards of them all.

The other view, that does away with personality and declares the world to be the product of blind, unconscious forces, is, we say, a later one. It seems to spring naturally out of the decay of a civilisation. It fits that mood of hopelessness which comes from a surfeit of unhealthy living. It is to a Rome decayed from its pristine vigour and sunk in gross sensuality, that Propertius, in elegant elegiacs, preaches the doctrine of devil-may-careism as the only true philosophy. "While the Fates permit let us satiate our eyes with lust, seeing the long night hastens to which there will be no succeeding day." Out of a like temper, though with a less cynical note, Sulpicius writes to Cicero, on the death of his daughter: "Why," he asks, "bemoan the death of a girl, when she and all of us, together with cities and empires, are passing down the throat of everlasting oblivion?" In some well-known lines Ennius argues away the idea of a Providence. If, says he, "the gods cared anything about man it would be well with the good and ill with the wicked. But that, we see, is not the case." The mood here has indeed, age after age, been a literary fashion. Omar Khayyám voices it, in lines which are the laughter of despair:

> Drink, for we know not whence we came, nor why,
> Drink, for we know not why we go, nor where!

The old Persian was never more relished than to-day. There is a multitude now of his denomination.

What, then, with all this in view, has religion to say for itself? Assuredly this attitude of humanity, and the things that have occasioned it, are not to be passed over lightly. The truth-seeker will give to every one of these considerations its due weight. But when the utmost has been urged on that side, how does the account stand? Dismissing, as we may easily do, the notion of an unseen malevolence as the cause of our human calamities, what evidence do these disasters offer against the contrary Christian view of a benign Providence as directing our affairs? How far do they support a doctrine of chance medley? The first thing here to be said is that the Universe, regarded as a whole, obstinately refuses to be taken at this valuation. Earthquakes, and the whole line of destructions for which they stand, are, we perceive, not the only things in it. They are, in fact, only an insignificant part of all we see. Just as clear to us as the brutality of these forces, is the spirituality of other forces. When you have loaded one scale you have to begin to load the other. Nature's wholesale murders are a part of life. True, and so are art and science, beauty and happiness, the death of Christ and the soul's aspirations. We cannot work out our sum without taking in these factors. If the other side means something so does this, and the question is, Which means most?

It is, indeed, curious, when we come to think of it, that our accusation against Nature on such

occasions as the present seems to rest entirely on her *mode* of action instead of on the action itself. It is when she kills or destroys suddenly and wholesale that we exclaim and despair. As a matter of fact, in these operations she is only doing what she is always doing, in another way. She kills a thousand people in an earthquake, but she will kill the fifteen hundred million of us now alive on this planet just as certainly, and all the generations that are to follow. Every birth carries with it a sentence of death. "*Nascentes morimur, finisque ab origine pendet.*" Faith has long ago accustomed itself to death, has indeed flourished upon it. The best thought of Greece and Rome refused to regard it as an evil. "No one," says Socrates, in his Apology, "knows whether death, which men in their fear apprehend to be the greatest evil, may not be the greatest good." Æschylus calls it the healer, the curer of all ills.

Indeed, we of these later ages are in greater danger than were the men of the earlier ones, of taking our comfort-theory as the ground for judging the cosmic morals. We make the blunder of regarding the physical consciousness as our one scale of measurement. Whereas, as the deeper philosophy of our time has so abundantly shown, the physical consciousness offers only the outermost edge of reality. Its verdicts are full of illusions, full of contradictions, which it is for philosophy, in its search for the core of things, to exhibit and to think away. It is the business of catastrophe and of calamity to rid our thought about God, the Supreme Reality, of the provincialism which we

permit to cling about it. Our human analogies are no measure at all of His meaning about us. If we try to bring His working to that scale, the scheme breaks down at once. We know the argument. "We do not kill the man we love. We do not, if we can help it, let our little children fall into the fire and burn to death. Can He be love who does slay, who does let the fire kindle on these innocents?" The answer is simple. Our love expresses itself according to the limitations of our knowledge. It is in that limitation a true and natural expression. But let us remember it *is* a limitation. What do we know ultimately about burning and about slaying? We see one side of them, whereas there are a thousand sides. We judge as though we have here a completed transaction, whereas what happens is only the beginning of an endless series. Could we see the whole process as God sees it, the thousand sides of it at present to us invisible, the whole infinite series of after results, our feeling concerning it would be entirely changed. Our feeling would then be like His.

And let us remember that the shock to our consciousness occasioned by physical catastrophe, the sense it creates of an utter indifference in nature, as though the shaking down of our cities were to it as the disturbance of an anthill, may be susceptible of an interpretation quite the opposite of the ordinary one. That man can lose so much shows how rich he is. But that is not all. His revolt against the physical universe here, his sense of injury under its blows, is in itself the most

significant feature of the situation. His attitude is inexplicable on the supposition that he is a mere part of this physical nature. That he can lose so much, that he has a range of consciousness capable of being struck at in this tremendous way is the opposite of an argument against the vanity of life. It is, on the contrary, man's disasters, his catastrophes, that give the *cachet* to his rank and his destiny.

To this is to be added that the common interpretation of these calamities—that they are entirely indiscriminate in their dealing with men, striking down with the same indifference innocent and guilty, saint and sinner—is equally wide of the mark. Here again we see how the surface view, the appeal to the physical consciousness, blinds us to the ultimate fact. Ennius, whom we have quoted, is quite wrong. For the most striking feature of these events is the entire and delicate discrimination with which they distribute their effects. Nature, even in her earthquake moods, grades her dealings with the nicest exactness. The one event may smite us all, but each will take it in a different way. And our separate way will be in strict accord with our entire inner state and training. How different the same pain to the weakling who howls under it, and to a Posidonius, who in his torture says to Pompey, "Pain do what thou wilt, I shall never be drawn to say thou art an evil!" It is a sense of this which leads Plato to his great declaration in the "Republic," that "the just man, though stretched on the rack, though his eyes are dug out, will be happy," and

to that even more wonderful word of his, in which he anticipates St. Paul, where, speaking again of the just man, he says, "Even when he is in poverty and sickness, or any other seeming misfortune, all things in the end will work together for good to him in life and death." The outer edge of an event is, in fact, always the least part of it. The essential is its relation to our mental and spiritual state.

Man has lived with catastrophes through all his history, and his faith has survived them. No number of them in the future will persuade him that the scheme of things under which he finds himself is a farrago of nonsense. He will persist rather in believing with Bourget, that "this obscure universe has a mysterious and kindly signification." The people of San Francisco, we read, reared altars in the midst of their ruins, and on the first Sunday after they had lost all joined their voices in the worship of God. And many of them, we dare say, felt His presence as they had never felt it before. A "Deus absconditus," a God that hideth Himself truly, and yet One who in secret marvellous ways discloses Himself to the human spirit.

Christianity is, in the best sense, a "Religion of Calamity." Goethe called it the religion of sorrow. Assuredly, as none other, it has sounded the depths of sorrow and exhibited to us their meaning. One who had sounded those deeps as few have asks, "Is not He who made misery wiser than thou art?" Deepest of all interpretations of calamity is the interpretation of Christ. In His Cross we have a religion built on catastrophe. It

is a defiance of it and a victory over it. In Jesus, who, while enduring there the worst that nature and the world could inflict, breathes the name of "Father," we have the clearest, divinest ray of light that, from the darkened heavens, has ever shot athwart the deep mystery of life.

IV

What Was Pentecost?

PENTECOST, as the Jews knew it, was one of those nature festivals in which the early world expressed at once its poetry and its religion. There is a strong family likeness between this feast of first fruits and the great gatherings for mystic rite and popular rejoicings with which Rome, Greece and the East hailed the coming of spring and of summer. We do not sneer to-day at Paganism, any more than we sneer at Judaism. We feel the solidarity of humanity. We have a sympathy born of insight for those who, at Eleusinian mystery or Dionysic procession, sought to exhibit their sense of the mystery of life, their desire to interpret its meaning, their gratitude to the Power that gave it. The world was young then, infantile. We are so much wiser to-day, and yet with all our knowledge do we not miss something of that early exuberance? We can understand Keats's elegy over what is gone.

> Glory and loveliness have passed away;
> For if we wander out in early morn,
> No wreathed incense do we see upborne
> Into the East to meet the smiling day;
> No crowd of nymphs, soft-voiced and young and gay,
> In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
> Roses and pinks and violets, to adorn
> The shrine of Flora in her early May.

That phase indeed has gone. But the Jewish Pentecost, decaying like the rest of those ancient festivals, was reborn to civilisation in the most startling way. The story given us in the Acts is the story of one of those births of time which introduce a new era, a fresh quality of life. It has been largely spoiled for us by theology. We have to clear away a good many of its conventional interpretations, to see the whole happening in the light which modern knowledge sheds upon it, before we reach its true significance. The account in the second chapter of the Acts is not, as to all its details, taken by the modern critic *au pied de la lettre*. The earlier chapters of the book are not contemporary history in the same sense as the "travel document" which comes later. There has been time for a certain embellishment. The "Acts" chapter is an Eastern story told us in the Eastern way. In reading it we are irresistibly reminded of another occurrence at Jerusalem three centuries later and of the account given of it by Christian historians. When Julian the Apostate ordered workmen to dig the foundations of a new Jewish temple, Gregory Nazianzen declares there was a whirlwind and an earthquake. There appeared "balls of fire." Sozomen and Theodoret add that crosses, star-shaped, and of blackish hue, appeared on the garments of the beholders. The Eastern imagination, especially in matters of religion, has always been a vivid one.

We have to construct our own theory of what precisely happened. Neander suggests that the external concomitants of the scene were largely

subjective impressions. What the gift of tongues amounted to is to some extent interpreted for us by St. Paul's account of the "gift," as exercised in the Church at Corinth, where men and women in a state of high exaltation uttered mysterious sounds unintelligible to the outsider, similar, apparently, to the ululations of the early Irvingite meetings. These outward signs, whatever they were, are reported to us in the narrative as accompaniments of the descent of "the Holy Ghost." We are not so sure to-day as were our fathers that the conventional theology has properly understood the New Testament writers in their use of this phrase. What we have to remember here is that they did not invent their religious terms. They used those that were already in vogue, and in the sense then currently received. They spoke of the Holy Spirit as the men of the time spoke. In the generation to which Jesus belonged the Spirit was thought of not as an independent personality, but as the power of God, working especially in inspiration and inner purification. It was common amongst the Jews of the time to speak in this sense of the Holy Spirit or the "Spirit of God." Nor was either the term or the conception confined to the Jews. In the ancient Persian cult of Mithras, the initiate, after performing certain rites, prays "that I through the Spirit may be born again, and that in me, purified by sacred rite and delivered from guilt, the Holy Spirit may live and move." When, therefore, the story speaks of the gathered people as "being filled with the Holy Ghost," we have room for a less straitened, a less

rigidly restricted interpretation of the phrase than theology is accustomed to give.

Looking into our narrative in this modern way, we begin to get an idea of what seems to have happened. A number of Jews, who had been followers of Jesus, at one of their public meetings have a remarkable spiritual experience. There is a great ferment of souls, accompanied by outward manifestations not dissimilar to those of a modern revival. The excitement amounted to ecstasy, and there was a confusion which led the bystanders to think the people affected either drunk or crazy. This, be it noted, was the more remarkable since the Jews, compared with other nations, could not be called a neurotic or emotional people. There are races whose temperament lends itself easily to religious frenzy. The Phrygians, from whom sprang the Montanist sect distinguished in the second century for its extravagant enthusiasm, were known before their conversion to Christianity for similar excitements in the worship of Cybele. To-day the Celt shows an emotional susceptibility which is foreign to the Saxon. But the Jew, as we have said, was not of this type, The New Testament is hardly a "revivalist" book. It would be difficult, indeed, to imagine a greater contrast than that between the majestic calm of the Sermon on the Mount and the wild incoherencies of a backwoods camp meeting.

If anyone suspects the genuineness or the depth of the inner movement in this Jerusalem meeting let him attend to what follows. Its immediate effect was the production of a new social order.

There was a redistribution of property. When we reflect on the tenacity with which the Israelite, from father Jacob down to his descendant in Houndsditch, holds on to his personal belongings, we arrive at some sort of idea of the force which was operating on these minds and consciences to compel them to this great renunciation. A modern critic makes the somewhat cynical observation that the Jerusalem enthusiasm which gave up everything, so impoverished the congregation that they were obliged, as Paul's letters show us, to sue for help from their Gentile brethren. That may be so. Their communism was premature, and its first form did not subsist. But the principle that was started in that room, under the influence of this primal emotion—the principle that humanity is a family, every member of which is entitled to the household love and succour—is to-day the principle to which international society by one path or another is everywhere laboriously pushing its way.

What, then, *was* the power which, working on these strong self-contained souls, stirred them so mightily? The modern psychologist, arguing on purely natural lines, would explain it as a kind of "burst upwards" of the disciples' subliminal consciousness. They had been living and brooding together, possessed with one idea, the tragic death of their Master, and the mysterious events that had followed. In this way had been accumulated in the storehouse of their emotional nature quantities of combustible material, a material which in the excitement of the Pentecost gatherings and

of this special meeting had reached explosion point. These "explosion points" of nations and societies are continually met with in history. They are a feature of the human evolution. The Renaissance, the Reformation, the French Revolution are illustrations. There is in each case a long hoarding of material, a long silent work of the human subconsciousness upon it; then some fact or circumstance comes as torch to the fuel, and all goes up in thunder and flame.

There is no doubt much in this statement, but it is incomplete. In human spiritual evolution, as in the natural evolution, we trace the operation of the eternal laws. But law here is not everything. Before law can work it must have something to work upon. The sun's action comes before the laws of the sun's action. Man's move upwards has endless natural concomitants, which we can more or less distinctly trace. But behind all that is ever the mystery of the power that moves him. Pentecost in its innermost meaning exhibits to us one of those spiritual overflows which mark every stage of the human ascent. But high tides and overflows represent a pull somewhere from an outside force. The sea is urged by the moon; the soul's wave-movement has also its lunar laws. The immense human response of Pentecost was in proportion to an impulse from behind. The disciples personalised that energy. Peter, in the story, declares that the power poured upon them was an influence diffused by their crucified Master from His place in the Unseen. Why should we not accept that statement? Philosophy, which

only a short while ago jeered at the personal in these matters as a mere anthropomorphism, is to-day in a new attitude. It finds that materialism is just an anthropomorphic as is the New Testament, only in another way. Philosophy has, in fact, to-day no valid argument against the doctrine that the spiritual force that is transforming man is a personal force.

Can we repeat Pentecost? There is nothing more doleful than attempts at spiritual repetitions. The soul knows its hour and will not be coerced. Moreover, to propose to repeat a thing is to deny the law of progress. To-day is greater than yesterday. It has its own work and its own revelation. What we learn from Pentecost is not to hark back to the old, but to push on courageously to the new. For amongst other things this Jerusalem event was an immense break with the past. It inaugurated a revolution. At bottom it meant the substitution of the religion of the spirit for a religion of form. We are only at the beginning as yet of all that this meant. For to-day we are carrying this evolution into a vaster sphere. Precisely as Pentecost meant a religion which transcended Judaism, so the movement now going on means a religion which transcends mediævalism. The Christianity we have inherited was set in a framework which is visibly falling to pieces. Our task is to build its vital elements into a new and larger synthesis. The Jerusalem Christians in their Pentecost message were the supreme heretics of their time. All the same they were God's appointed workers. The Power which moved them is the Power which in

our time is carrying Church and world into another and yet higher phase of thought and life.

The Jerusalem Pentecost drove the early Church into a great propaganda. Our Pentecost will in like manner have its propaganda. It will carry with it all the spiritual elements, the love, the sympathy, the human brotherliness which belonged to that first phase. But it will take with it something more. The Church's missionary effort is, before our eyes, developing an entirely new element. We cannot better describe it, or complete what we have here had to say, than by quoting Professor Seeley on this point in his "Natural Religion." "The children of modern civilisation are called to follow in the footsteps of Paul, of Gregory, of Boniface, of Xavier, Eliot and Livingstone. But they must carry not merely Christianity in its narrow clerical sense, but their whole mass of spiritual treasures to those who want them. Let us carry the true view of the universe, the true astronomy, the true chemistry and the true physiology to polytheists still wrapped in mythological dreams; let us carry progress and freewill to fatalist nations and to nations cramped by the fetters of primitive custom; let us carry the doctrine of a rational liberty to the heart of Oriental despotisms. In doing all this. . . we shall admit the outlying world into the great civilised community, into the modern city of God."

V

The Law of Change

NOTHING is more pathetic, and, at the same time, more singular, than the persistence with which man has rebelled against the primal law of his being, the law of change. The words he loves most are those which express the opposite of change. "Firm," "immovable," "steadfast," "eternal" are his first-class adjectives; just as "shifty," "unstable," "evanescent" are at the bottom of his value-scale. There are matters here—questions, anomalies—which most of us as yet have, perhaps, hardly puzzled out, and which it may be profitable to investigate. Change, we say, is written large on life. It might be called its hall-mark. The "eternal flux" was the watchword of one of the old Greek philosophies. In the majestic, melancholy lines of Lucretius there is no thought that more often recurs:

> Nec manet ulla sui similis res.
> Omnia migrant.

"Nor does anything abide like itself; everything is on the move." We realise this even more intensely now than did the ancients. Science gives us a universe which is a stupendous dance of atoms;

"atomic shivers," as one researcher calls them. We live, in fact, by change. Did our bodies remain fixed from one moment to another that moment would be our last. In this rush we seem to keep nothing. We lose our children as much by living as by dying. You have had to exchange your two-year-old, with his sweet, engaging ways, for this sturdy schoolboy—who is another affair altogether. Men think of deluges, earthquakes, revolutions—events that are sudden and violent—as the great change-instruments. But at the world's quietest the movement goes on not less surely than in its great uproars and upheavals. Take the story of a London street—Cheapside or Ludgate Hill. For nigh two thousand years, from the days of old Londinium in the Roman time, there has pulsed, without ceasing, a tide of life along these thoroughfares. And it was as day succeeded day —silently, imperceptibly, as the crowd moved over the pavements—that there crept into it bit by bit all the changes, in raiment, in speech, in manners, in ideas, that make the enormous gulf between that far-off time and our own.

We ourselves are on this flood, helpless to stay its movement. We may stop our clocks, but not the heart-beats that measure our days. "I have seen," says Montaigne, "the green shoot, the flowers and the fruit. Now I see '*la secheresse*.' I see it happily because it is natural." Undoubtedly the best way to see it. But the "natural" here will become still more welcome to us when we enter more deeply into what is contained in it. For now we discover that the change-flood which

sweeps us along is not master in the universe. It has its limits and its laws. Its limits to begin with. For it seems set here as the antithesis of something greater, older than itself—namely, the permanent. Change, we find, is an affair of the surface of things; it is of the outer rind of reality, not of its innermost core. It belongs to that order of phenomena with which science has to do. But science, to use the words of Wundt, one of her most eminent students, "indicates the path to territories beyond her own, ruled by other laws than those to which her realm is subject." Philosophy, which underlies science, shows us that we could, in fact, have no idea of change apart from the concept of a permanent. It shows us, in that thought-world which for us is the greatest of all realities, how the sweep and movement of the evanescent obtains all its strange effect upon us by contrast with a something within which tells of fixity, of eternity. Our thought-world is as full of the changeless as the material world is of change. Here we find laws—of mathematics, of logic, of the inherent relations of things, which, amid all outward permutations, remain the same. The truths of geometry, of thought sequence, of harmony, are more solid than the hills. The whole sphere of the invisible, in short, is a sphere of the eternal.

Change, we see, has its limits. It has also its laws. There is, we find, an invisible wrapped around every visible, and it is this invisible that is permanent. We transmute our products by chemical processes; but we can never change the

law of the processes. We can combine our oxygen and hydrogen, but we have no power over the combining proportions. Nature, so prodigal of her mutations, is also the greatest of conservatives. How she keeps to her forms! Why is it that carbon when it crystallises into diamond invariably assumes some form derived from the cube, while quartz will as invariably take the shape of a six-sided prism? The same metal goes on eternally yielding the same spectrum. Indeed, there is an aspect in which we might speak almost of the monotony of nature. *Plus ca change, plus c'est la même chose.* It is this aspect which certain pessimists have seized on as a ground for their grumble at the universe. Marcus Aurelius complains that "things are repeated and come over again apace." Goethe tells of a contemporary who disliked the ever-returning green of spring and wished that "by way of change it might once appear red." Schopenhauer likens life to a conjurer's booth where the tricks are made to be seen only once. If you live through two generations you see them twice over and their effect is gone. Spinoza has erected this sameness into a philosophy, and offers us a universe which, being eternally perfect in itself, can as such make no progress, any more than a circle can ever be more a circle than it is.

This brings us to the real point of our discussion. Spinoza has had a new vogue of late, and there is a certain order of mind for whom he will always have a great fascination. Always, indeed, he will stand amongst the noblest and purest of spirits, and his system for one of the most wonderful of intel-

lectual creations. But humanity is wiser than the wisest of its sons, and it is outgrowing Spinoza. We see to-day that his geometrical demonstrations are misplaced as applied to the mystery of the universal life. Mathematics go deep into the cosmos, but they do not contain the whole of it. His denial of ends, and of final causes, is an *a priori* assumption which the facts, as we now know them, do not bear out. He wrote before the key of evolution had been discovered, the key which has unlocked so many secret chambers and opened so many new perspectives. In particular it opened a view unknown to him, of vastest significance both for science, philosophy and religion. It is that of infinite progression. It gives us, in short, the essential law of change, in which we see that change is ever in the long run a *change upward.*

Spinoza says the universe is perfect. Its perfection is in itself. There is nothing else than it. God is the universe and the universe is God. It is the sum of all there is, and you cannot have more than there is. But what are the facts, so far as we can now see? Do they not reveal to us, rather, a universe that is not so much perfect as *perfecting?* We see everywhere movement, and a movement one way. Science points us to a life-series which has always been mounting the ladder, from zoophyte to man. Nature in this showing does not repeat herself, but to the old adds ever her something new. The history of civilisation is the repetition on another scale of the zoologic story. Man has not only moved; he has climbed. His ideas, his morality, his religions, have shown

ever the fresh increment. He has not repeated simply what he had. The later generations show an accretion, an importation of what the earlier did not possess. The most striking feature in to-day's religious thought is that men are bewildered by their own upward movement. They are distressed to find a something in themselves to which their sacred books, their religious traditions do not properly respond. They are unable to see what, nevertheless, is the plainest of truths, that they, because they stand farther on in the movement, are the recipients of an inspiration which is higher than the older and written one, and by which the older is being judged.

But what does all this point to? Surely to a cosmic view which neither philosophy nor religion has as yet fairly discussed, but which they will have to discuss. Science and philosophy run after Monism to-day, but the signs are that when all is done they will end in Dualism. The signs are, that is, of an external universe which is not perfected, but on the way to perfection. Which in its turn means a Perfect of Being and Reality that is behind and beyond the visible universe, greater than it, and which, in its constant self-disclosures, brings ever the cosmos closer to its own height and beauty. Why should we think of the universe other than as we think of ourselves? Why should we not say that, just as the soul in us is in a way a mirror of the Deity, but an imperfect one; and that in proportion as the soul grows, in that degree the Divinity is more clearly revealed; so this external frame of things is just a vehicle for the

self-disclosure of God, and will, in its infinite progression, open to us ever more of the inexhaustible riches of His perfection?

It is, we say, to some such point as this that the higher science and the higher philosophy of to-day are steadily moving. And the lesson from it is that which religion has taught from the beginning, the lesson, namely, of our inheritance in the Invisible, of our permanent home and treasure there. What is seen has all come out of the unseen, is a sort of deposit from it, and there is an infinity more to follow. But our share is in the fountain as well as in the stream. We are not of the visible only; our inmost texture is of the invisible, and we partake of its eternity.

> Kein Wesen kann zu nichts zerfallen,
> Das Ewige regt sich fort in allen.

"No being can to nothing fall, in everything the Eternal moves." So sings the German prophet. But we can go further. Science and philosophy take us to the threshold; the Christian Gospel introduces us to the presence chamber. These suggest a power, a wisdom, greater than all we see; this tells us of a love that passeth knowledge. Spinoza offers us the *Amor intellectualis Dei:* Jesus shows us the heart of the Father, and that, and that alone, suffices us.

VI

Religion and Crime

THE other day, passing up Ludgate Hill the present writer saw a thief taken in the act. There was a sudden rush ; half a dozen hands held the struggling wretch until a policeman, appearing at the nick of time, took over the capture. "Got it in his hand, has he ?" said the grinning officer, as, seizing the culprit by the collar, he marched away with him, followed by the crowd. "He's got pinched," said an urchin to a group of companions, who entered heartily into the jest. Everybody seemed interested. The incident was a relief to the monotony of the day. Meanwhile the individual who formed the centre of it all was clearly not enjoying himself. He was a type of the London *vaurien*—of its lowest class, undersized, with bent shoulders, squalid ; hunger and despair looking out of his eyes. The most astonishing part of the affair, to one onlooker at least, was the perfect ease with which it seemed to fall into a pre-arranged system of things. Everything and everybody appeared to be ready for that thief. The British Constitution, the law court, the magistrate, the policeman, the prison, were all waiting for him. They were

there in anticipation of his procedures ; he performed his share in a business, every detail of which had been previously thought out. The catching and immurement of thieves, is not that a feature of civilisation ? Society knows exactly the part it has to play. "Three months' hard," endured by the prisoner and paid for by the nation, will perfectly settle the account.

But *is* the account settled ? Have we done with our criminal when we have caught and gaoled him ? It may after all appear that this is the beginning rather than the end of the matter. We have, let us remember, a criminal class in London alone equal to the population of a large town. Has society done its part towards these teeming thousands when it has erected its palace of justice, increased the cell accommodation of Portland, and made new appointments to the magistracy ? Or is it not time to reconsider this whole business of crime and the criminal, and to realise that, wrapped up in this one question, is the whole problem of life, of religion, and of the social pact ?

Thought on these matters is moving swiftly in our day. We have got a long way, for instance, from the Carlyle attitude. His recipe, in the "Latter Day Pamphlets," of "a hearty hatred for scoundrels" ; his sneer at the notion of "drilling twelve hundred scoundrels by methods of kindness" ; his gibe at the philanthropic treatment as that of a crew which, having lost its way round Cape Horn, instead of taking to their sextants and asking about the laws of wind and water, and of earth and heaven, are serving out to the

worthy and unworthy alike a double allowance of grog" ; all this has become clean out of date. It is precisely because society has been asking about "the laws of heaven and earth" that "the hating of scoundrels," and the mere hanging of them, as the final word, have become impossible. The Carlylean method pays no attention to facts of human nature and of society which we have now become fully aware of. It takes the criminal there as he is, but asks no question as to how he came to be what he is, or as to what other thing than this he may become. It regards society always as the judge, and never inquires as to whether, in the balance between these two, society itself may not sometimes be the greater criminal.

It is dawning upon us that in this department of life a huge mistake has been made, a mistake centuries old, closely allied with other great mistakes that it is now more than time we set to work to rectify. In exploring this region we find ourselves brought inevitably into contact with religion. Religion has all along been a governing factor in the treatment of criminals, and will continue to be. But its record is a strangely mixed one. It is to religion we must look for the purifying forces which will cleanse this dark corner of life. At the same time it has to be said that to false views of religion an enormous amount of the mischief done in it is plainly due. The most fatal thing in theology has been its notion, diligently taught for centuries, that punishment was an end in itself; that God's way with wrongdoers was to torture them for ever. Mediæval doctrine and its survivals

have here certainly not been complimentary to Deity. The Churches who held it worshipped God, but assuredly they did not trust Him. Instead, they warned men against Him; they warned them of what He might do to them, of what horrors He was capable of inflicting on them. And it was of an equal barbarity they convicted Him in their suggested methods of placation. They could get round Him, it was suggested, by substitutions and sacrifices. Even the ancients knew better than this. Plato, in the "Laws," says there were three suppositions about the gods on which evil-doers rested their hopes—that they did not exist, or that they did not care for man, or that they might be easily appeased by sacrifices. And Ovid, in the "Fasti," has a cutting remark on ceremonial salvation:

> Ah, nimium faciles, qui tristia crimina caedis
> Fluminea tolli posse putetis aqua.

("Too easy-going are you who imagine that flowing water can carry away the sad crimes of blood.") How much nobler and nearer the fact than all this priestly juggling, the view which Plutarch maintains, that punishment does not so much follow upon wrong-doing as that it is contemporaneous with and inherent in it!

The false view of God and His ways fostered by the Latin Church (for it was never held by the Greek fathers) reacted with fatal effect upon the authorities both of Church and State. If God punished for punishment's sake so might man. The hell which flamed in the next world must have

its counterpart in this. The priest was here more cruel than the layman, and the survival of this feeling is to be noted in later history. One of the darkest blots on the Church, down almost to our own day, has been its full acquiescence in the worst features of our criminal law, and its resistance to any amelioration. The strongest defenders of the savagery of the English code, of its death sentences for sheep stealing and similar offences, were the Anglican bishops. And the outside churches were not much better. In the "Heart of Midlothian" Scott tells us how, in Edinburgh, "criminals under sentence of death were brought to the Tolbooth Church to hear and join in public worship on the Sabbath before execution." The clergyman, on the occasion he describes (and he is here reciting history), "preached an affecting discourse." Doubtless. They were good at that. And so far as one can see they would have gone on preaching "affecting discourses" to condemned sheep-stealers and smugglers for ever, without ever asking about the ethics of the condemnation.

But a mighty change has come over the public mind. We think differently to-day about both man and God, and the new thought is filtering rapidly down into our whole theory and practice of law and of punishment. On this theme science has, by the sheer accumulation of facts, cleared away a whole cloud of ecclesiastical misconceptions. It has shown us that human nature, in its worst criminal forms, is simply good stuff badly handled. Man is the greatest force we know, and he requires careful management. People who deal with dyna-

mite the wrong way will get a bad opinion of it—those who are left of them. And your human is mightier than dynamite. Now the human force means well where it gets a chance. When Lord Palmerston startled the orthodoxy of his day by declaring in the House of Commons that "all men are born good," he was only repeating what Plato and Clement of Alexandria had said centuries before him. Innumerable experiments have shown that, taken at its worst, where knowledge and sympathy have been brought to bear upon it, the material is good. Our human wreckage, like other waste products, can be made profitable when scientifically treated. In the "Creevey Papers" it is recorded how Lord and Lady Duncannon, in the early part of the nineteenth century, by three years' work on their estate and town of Peltown, in Ireland, brought the population to a condition unsurpassed in order, comfort and civilisation. "And yet it was only four miles from Carrick, one of the most lawless towns in Tipperary." That is only one of a thousand similar testimonies that might be cited. Dr. Barnardo showed how the riff-raff of the London gutters, taken out of its evil surroundings and translated to a proper environment, could be turned into good citizens. No fact, in short, is better established than that of the human recoverability. Jesus taught this, though His Church forgot it. It was this knowledge which sent Him ever to the outcast and the lost.

But this opens to us another consideration. Society hitherto has been busy indicting the criminal.

It has called him all the bad names of its vocabulary. It has caught him, judged him, prisoned him; and our Chelsea philosopher winds up by recommending a wholesale shooting and hanging of him. We are now, however, beginning dimly to perceive another side to all this, and are asking uneasily whether Society, of which we are a part, is not on the whole the greater criminal; and whether, if any shooting or hanging is to be done, it were not better to begin nearer home? Society, we perceive, has blundered villainously in two ways; first in making the criminal, and second in doing the worst with him when made. There needs to be a redistribution of blame, and also of correction.

Where, to begin with, has the criminal come from? How did he come to be what he is? Would our Ludgate Hill wretch, lugged by the grinning policeman to the lock-up, choose this lot, as compared for instance with that of the sleek, well-fed, well-pursed bystanders who looked on? Who chose it for him? What of the system which has allowed a fellow mortal to sink to this depth? But we are the makers and supporters of the system. Do not the words of Maeterlinck here burn the skin of every one of us? "For it is enough that we should feel the cold a little less than the labourer who passes by, that we should be better fed or clad than he, that we should buy any object that is not strictly indispensable, and we have unconsciously returned, through a thousand byways, to the ruthless act of primitive man despoiling his weaker brother." Here speaks that social conscience outside the Church which, in

these matters, is nearer the Christianity of Christ than the modern Church itself. The earlier Church was bolder. In teaching that the goods of the world are not properly partitioned, that poverty and crime are an indictment not so much of the poor and the criminal as of the rich, the Socialist of to-day is only saying what Chrysostom and Basil and Jerome and Tertullian said ages ago.

Initial robberies on the vastest scale depriving the people of their land and liberties, and forcing them to herd in the amorphous masses of the cities, have been one cause of the creation of the criminal classes. Another cause has been our stupidity and neglect. We are a wonderful people, we English! We are spending millions of money on the education of children between the ages of five and thirteen. To give them during those years the proper brand of theology we fight like tigers, turn out Governments, become Passive Resisters and what not. And when our child has reached thirteen; when, that is to say, he has entered upon his most critical and dangerous age, we forget all about him! He is free then to go to the devil by whatsoever quickest way he can find!

Thus we make our criminals. When made, we immure them in gaols, clothe them in a hideous garb, set them up, as poor Oscar Wilde said, as "the zanies of sorrow, clowns whose hearts are broken." We fix on them an indelible brand, and carefully shut out from them the means of return to an honest life. What barbarism it all is! And this in a day when no serious sociologist any longer believes in fear or pain as agencies in the reformation

of character. Nearly four centuries ago More in his "Utopia" taught that punishment should have as its only end the destruction of vices and the saving of men. It is time we had learned that lesson.

Let us sum up, in terms that may be easily remembered, the gist of what has been here advanced. Crime is a disease, and one that is everywhere curable. The existence of a criminal class is an indictment, not of that class specially, but of Society at large, whose greed and neglect have produced it. Every time a man enters the dock Society enters with him as *particeps criminis*. And, finally, the only way of curing our criminal is not by the infliction of pain, but by Christ's way of Divine sympathy, by standing in with him as a brother, by using our skill to fight his inner ailment, by changing his environment, by bringing in our goodwill to assist his diseased will; in a word, by giving his better self a chance.

VII

Pleasure

WHATEVER he is doing man is always the most interesting of studies. He is never more so than when "taking his pleasure." Often enough it is a sufficiently frivolous business in itself, yet nowhere than here are the heights and deeps of humanity, its weird problems, its endless vistas of possibility more strikingly displayed. At the outset a most singular question confronts us. How is it that pleasure has obtained so ill a name? The word lies under a religious ban. It has become one of the most sinister and equivocal in the dictionary. To call any one "a man of pleasure" is, in most circles, to suggest the worst. In hymns, sermons, devotions, the soul is warned against pleasure as one of its chief dangers. What does it mean?

For when, putting aside all prepossessions, we come to examine the matter for ourselves, we find Nature offering this banned product as her masterpiece, as her chief good. To that glow, that overflow of sensation which we know as a sense of pleasure, the whole machinery of life, at its best and highest, has contributed. It is only in the harmony of all Nature's powers, in the delicate

adjustment of a million co-operators within and without us, that this result is achieved. So wondrous delicate, is, indeed, the process, that it is never kept up for long at its first pitch. The pleasure of a walk, of a piece of noble scenery, of listening to great music, is never a fixed quantity. At the end one is sensible of fatigue, of strain, perhaps of vacuity. It is the earlier moments that give us the high rapture. Life seems then to exhale a delicate perfume, to offer a flavour which dissipates, almost ere it is fully recognised. To taste it again we must wait till another drop of that subtlest of essences has once more collected within us.

But this supreme product of Nature, this result of what seem her highest and healthiest states is, as we have said, placed under a ban, made the object of a thousand warnings. "This vain world's pleasure" is the refrain of our hymns. Pascal, one of the greatest of human spirits, made it one of his maxims "to renounce every pleasure." Bernard of Clairvaux speaks of himself and his associates as having "rejected as filth all that shines bright or sounds sweet to the ear." St. John of the Cross made it his rule to renounce all that was agreeable to the senses and to embrace all that was repulsive. How has this come about? The answer is given in the wondrous story, not by any means ended yet, of the human soul.

The story is in many parts. The education of the soul in relation to pleasure has been conducted not only by religion, but in an important degree by philosophy. We may spend a moment here

in inquiring as to its verdict. Ancient Greece and modern Germany have given us much that is illuminating on our subject, but nowhere, as Voltaire in his day acknowledged, has the moral question here been discussed with more depth and vigour, or with a clearer grasp of the issues involved, than in England. By Hobbes and Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, by Hume and Hartley, by Tucker and Paley of the earlier time, and by Bentham and Spencer, by Sedgwick and Martineau and Green in the later day, almost everything has been said that can be said. Some of these wage war without quarter against the ascetic position. To Abraham Tucker, to Bentham and to Paley happiness is simply the sum of pleasures. Pleasure, without qualification, is the chief good. Hartley, in his "Observations on Man," improves on this with his division of pleasures into those of gross self-interest, of refined self-interest, and of rational self-interest. But it was Hutcheson, in his "Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil" and his "Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections," who first developed into clearness the principle of the absolute difference in the quality and value of pleasures. It is from this starting-point that we are able to reduce the earlier chaos of opinion to harmony. It is in the light of his principle that we discover the real meaning of renunciation, and that the ascetics were not in such discord with nature as at first seemed. When he declares that "we have an immediate sense of a dignity, a perfection, or beatific quality in some kinds of pleasure which no intenseness of the

lower kinds may equal," we feel ourselves at once at the key of the position.

What we have learned since Hutcheson's day is all a confirmation of his teaching. Evolution, properly understood, shows us the way along which, on this question, science, philosophy and religion reach their reconciliation. It shows us, to begin with, pleasure as unquestionably a good. On all its planes it is a harmony, an achievement, a nature's triumph. Its varying forms, of lower and higher, represent the marvellous story of man's growth. Nature here is as a great musician, who begins his composition with a simple air, which as it proceeds is incessantly repeated, but ever with a fresh note, a new element brought in, until what at first was the barest musical thread has been woven into the most elaborate and complicated harmony.

That pleasure is an integral part, and a final end in the scheme of things, is a conclusion which it is impossible to escape. The lack of it is in itself a sign of unhealth, of an unnatural condition. Every element is charged with pleasure, every action yields it. To eat, to drink, to work, to rest, to sleep, to awake, to listen, to converse, to hear, to see—all is, to a wholesome nature, to enjoy. Sir James Paget, arguing from the whole analogy of things, maintained that dying, as a natural act, contained its own pleasure. The opposite of it—that is, pain, discomfort—is a signal of danger, of a breach in the constitutional order. The most unlikely things, properly treated, yield their pleasure. The anatomist finds delight in a skeleton. Nature is continually hoarding her

delights for us, and making them, like old wine, the more valuable for the keeping. It has taken a million years to ripen the exact sensation with which a geologist breaks open his stone and finds his fossil within. And as with things, so with circumstances. Renan is assuredly right in his observation that "everything considered, there are few situations in the vast field of existence wherein the balance of debt and credit does not leave a little surplus of happiness." Were it otherwise men would not cling to life as they do. Johnson, in his last days, swollen with dropsy and choked with asthma, would, he declared, have given one of his legs for another year of life. Poor Dodd, condemned to be hanged, when told by pious friends as a consolation that he was going to leave a wretched world, would not join in the cant. "No, no," said he; "it has been a very agreeable world to me."

How comes it, then, that, with all this before us, we have that note from religion; that there rises in us the scorn for the mere man of pleasure; that we revolt against the whole hedonist theory of living? Are we right in our disgust for Lord Chesterfield when he writes to his son—a natural son, by the way—exhorting him to pursue pleasure as "the last branch of his education"? Should we approve Madame du Chatelet, Voltaire's mistress, in her assertion that "we have nothing else to do in the world than to obtain agreeable sensations and sentiments"? Has De Chaulieu uttered the final word in declaring that "*la volupté* is the art of using pleasures with delicacy and to taste

them with sentiment" ? What is the difference between this attitude and that of the patriot who dies for his country, of the martyr who endures the scorching flame as a witness for his faith ? Is there any ascertainable link between the attitude of the Chesterfields and those others we have quoted, and that, to take one instance out of many, of a Pionius, one of the Decian martyrs, who, when told by the people of Smyrna that "it was good to live and to see the light," replied : "Yes, life is good, but there is a better life. Light is good if it be the true light. All around us is good and fair ; we do not wish for death or hate the works of God. But there is a better world in comparison with which we despise this."

We are here at the root of the whole matter. These utterances, so widely contrasted, are nevertheless all human and all natural. But they are on varying scales. They are a kind of psychological strata, exhibiting different stages in the evolution of the soul. Throughout them all there is, be it observed, one ground-note. Nature is in all of them true to her assertion of pleasure being essentially a good. The difference is in the kind of pleasure and the kind of good. The renunciator, the patriot, the martyr, in a word, the spiritual man, has no disagreement with the rest on our first question. They do not belittle God's world. They are not so foolish as to decry that marvellous system—evidence in its every detail of the Eternal beneficence—by which the sum of things yields unceasingly to us its usufruct of enjoyment. But the music for them has become scientific. It has

advanced beyond the first simple air. It contains that, losing none of its melody, but into the composition some other elements, from a higher source, have come. Knowing the animal pleasures, they find they are more than animals; that they are spirits, in a spiritual universe, which in its turn yields its delights. Their endurance of bodily pains, of material losses at the call of principle, was never regarded by them as a contradiction of that law of Nature which fixes enjoyment as the outcome and goal of all healthy effort. If the delight was not there at the moment their faith saw it waiting. Their endurance was a price paid for the truer well-being and enjoyment of their fellows. "Oh, my beloved and dearest," writes Athanasius from his exile to his friends, "if it is from tribulations we must pass to comfort, we ought not to be grieved or frightened . . . but to treat such things as a probation." There is here, we say, always the ground tone of a happiness present or to come.

More than that. We have spoken of that marvellous range of the law of pleasure by which the most unlikely objects are made to yield it. A modern school of philosophy has sneered immeasurably at the Christian theory of self-denial. And undoubtedly the principle in earlier times was carried to unreasonable lengths—beyond all that the New Testament enjoins. Yet in what seem to us their wildest excesses the ascetics exhibit to us no breach of continuity in the law of enjoyment; what they instead reveal are the immense joy-reserves of the soul. We see here men stripping themselves of every outer good, of every comfort

of the senses, because they had discovered inner resources so full and so intense as made these other pleasures infantile in comparison. Does anyone doubt that Jesus on the Cross had a deeper joy than Cæsar on his throne; that Francis of Assisi possessed the world more truly than the reigning pope and emperor?

The truths which emerge from a study of this kind seem now fairly obvious. The system of things has been constructed with a view to universal enjoyment. Man at the height he has now reached has a vast scale from which he may choose. To live amongst the lower animal pleasures is to desert his rank, to deny the spiritual order to which he belongs. The martyrs, the renunciators, believe in pleasure; they have it in their sacrifice; they know they are by their sacrifice procuring it for others. No present circumstances can hinder the ultimate reign of the nobler joy. Out of the present tribulation will come the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

VIII

Religion and Ghosts

EVERYBODY to-day talks of psychic phenomena. The theme has become almost the next after the weather. The subject is not as yet an entirely serious one with the public. It is, like mothers-in-law or marriage with a deceased wife's sister, a topic for badinage. There is, nevertheless, far more in it than has been discovered by the jesters. The facts, so far as we know them, are indeed not at all a laughing matter. They come and go, leaving scant opportunity for accurate observation; yet even in passing they flash a gleam which, like sudden lightning on the waters, opens the vision of unfathomed depths beneath.

We propose here to discuss the relation of this question to religion. We are, of course, not the first to follow that track. A modern philosophy greatly in vogue goes back to ghosts for its theory of religious origins. Mr. Herbert Spencer finds here the starting point of the belief in a future state, and of the systems of religion that are built upon it. In his dreams the savage, while his body lay inert on the ground, found himself moving freely, conversing, recognising as close to him

people who he knew were far distant, or long since passed away. These apparitions, in sleep or trance, were to him as real as the actual world. From them he conceived a spiritual world, where the soul moved when the body was inert or dead. His waking imagination easily confirmed the dreams of the night. The vision, the ghostly appearance, became actualities in his scheme of life. The ancestor he had seen in his dream was existent in the unseen. He must open communication with him; he must pay homage to his chiefs yonder, and to whatsoever powers ruled there beside.

On this, it may be said, to begin with, that if it were admitted as in itself an accurate account of religious beginnings, there would lie here no argument whatever against the authority and the sanctions of religion as we know it. To say that religion came to us through a lowly gateway is simply to offer us one more instance of the universal order. Everything has come to us that way. Nothing would be more absurd than to judge of the proportions and significance of a life-fact by its first appearances. Nature, in planning her great achievements, always begins low. She makes no show at the start; gives no hint, in the first rude sketch, of the wealth of genius that is yet to appear. With a millionaire's resources, she starts on thirty shillings a week. In her magnificent evolution, what appears at first is nothing. The question always to be asked is, "What lies behind?" And nowhere do we so need to ask it as in discussing religion.

But a defence of this kind is now almost unnecessary. A curious change is coming over opinion.

Thirty years ago the dream and ghost theory was being urged as a disparagement of the religious position. The spiritual concept was shown as a product of savagery, and that seemed enough to dispose of its claims. But to-day we approach the subject from another starting-point. A different question is being asked. "Why is it," the modern thinker demands, "that among all the races of mankind, civilised and uncivilised, there has appeared and has survived, the belief in a life after death?" For nothing apparently is more contrary to the evidence. The vote of the senses is dead against it. The mind, as Lucretius long ago pointed out, appears to follow exactly the fortunes of the body. His

> Præterea gigni pariter cum corpore et una
> Crescere sentimus pariterque senescere mentem.

(Besides, we see the mind to be born with the body, and grow with the body, and to decay with it) seems to settle the whole matter. When death comes the entire system breaks up. The separate particles, held together no longer by the vital bond, form new combinations. The elements are here, for they are eternal, but the form we knew is gone and will return no more.

With all this for man to think about, why his permanent belief in survival? We say nothing here of those new aspects of matter and its mysterious potencies which the latest science is revealing. Radium, the properties of radiant matter, the energy of electrons, the composition of the molecule, the entire range of supersensual physics, open to us vistas of thought of which our fathers knew

nothing. But what they count for in the argument is aside from our immediate question, which is, "Why have men in all the past ages, with the evidence of the senses so powerfully against them, believed that the soul survived death's catastrophe?" That they did so is seen in all literature. Vedic hymns, 3,500 years old, sing of a spiritual body inside the fleshly one, by which the dead rise to heaven. And that note is everywhere. The answer which is being given to-day, and by men who have every claim to be heard, is largely in the Spencerian direction, but with a new point and a new emphasis. They hold that the belief *did* come from the dream and the apparition, but with the addition that some at least of the dreams and some of the apparitions were really valid as evidence, and have to-day to be accepted as such.

We have in fact on this subject reached a new position. For the first time in history the question of apparitions, of psychic phenomena in general, has been taken up as a branch of science. We are far from the attitude so humorously expressed by Fontenelle, who "didn't believe in ghosts, but was afraid of them." Our age wants to know, and is on the track of knowing. It is collecting the evidence that has floated down the ages, and is examining it with a new eye. It is boldly entering this dim region in search of its laws. The frame of mind which dismissed the ancient stories with a shrug, is recognised not as science but as ignorance. A record such, for instance, as that of Apollonius of Tyana, that when at Ephesus he saw in spirit the assassination of Domitian at Rome; crying out

suddenly in the midst of his friends, "Strike him down, the tyrant!" and declaring immediately, "Domitian has just been slain," is accepted to-day as falling entirely within the category of the possible. The researches of a Crookes, of a Myers, of a Gurney, of a Rochas, of a Gabriel Delanne, have brought within our view a mass of facts which are as solidly based as they are wonderful. With many of these explorers the existence of an ethereal body within the material, which can be exteriorised under certain conditions, is held as proved. Sir William Crookes has taken photographs of these materialisations. M. Rochas speaks of an externalised consciousness which feels a touch or a pin prick. Swedenborg communicated messages from deceased persons to relatives on matters of fact which were found to be accurate in every detail. Had Kant lived in our day he would probably have gone further than his recorded admission on this subject, striking as it is from one of his quality: "For my part, ignorant as I am of the way in which the human spirit enters the world, and the ways in which it goes out of it, I dare not deny the truth of many of the narratives that are in circulation."

But if this body of evidence is to be accepted as containing at least a nucleus of fact, what is the relation of it to religion as we know it? The relation is very evident and very immediate. The sphere we are investigating, let us admit, is one that lends itself readily to imposture, and it is one where the impostor has revelled. "Sludge, the Medium," has displayed himself here in all his cunning, in all his vulgarity. Yet a Brown-

ing, in the midst of his merciless exposure, finds at the bottom of the business a residuum which his scepticism cannot get over. His own belief one sees is in that final question,

> Which of those who say they disbelieve,
> Your clever people, but has dreamed his dream,
> Caught his coincidence, stumbled on his fact,
> He can't explain ?

And amid the thousand impostures it is the one fact that counts. As Hegel has it : "*Dem Begriffe nach einmal ist allemal.*" ("In the region of ideas 'once' is equal to 'always.'") The one fact clears away all *a priori* impossibilities, for, as Aristotle says : "Things which have happened are manifestly possible, for if they had been impossible they would not have happened." One single message from the unseen world and that unseen is proved as actual. One demonstration that the soul can act outside the body, and the question of its survival of death has entered on a new phase.

And this question becomes, we say, immediately religious. It gives the death-blow to that materialism of which Goethe once said "the theory which reduces all things to matter and motion appeared to me so grey, so Cimmerian, and so dead, that we shuddered at it as at a ghost." On the contrary, man is here shown to be a spiritual being, in a spiritual universe, and the difference is immense. The thought of a continuance of being is, and by the constitution of human nature must necessarily be, one of the great religious motives. We may talk

of "virtue being its own reward," and of "doing right because it is right," but it remains that the thought of sheer extinction; of our endeavour ending, so far as we are concerned, in utter nothingness; of our virtue or our vice debouching, after a few brief years, into the same all-swallowing *néant*—must make all the difference to the struggle.

Moreover, the facts won in this research carry so much that is intimately religious with them. They are in accord with all the soul's aspirations, when it is at its highest. Are we not continually saying to ourselves:

> And thus I know this earth is not my sphere,
> For I cannot so narrow me but that
> I still exceed it?

And this other feature of the situation, that into the unseen state we carry no smallest item of our outward possessions; that houses, lands, shares, our ornaments and jewels of price, our luxury and splendour of living, fall absolutely away, leaving as sole residuum the accumulations of our inner consciousness, what make we of that? Once scientifically apprehended and solidly fixed in the mind, it should be the death, surely, of that insane coveting, of the mad lust for wealth which rages to-day? Filled with these truths, a man ceases to be in a hurry. His outlook takes in eternity. As the years pass his interest in life does not diminish, but rather increases. He has a stake in it beyond what is seen.

> But the soul
> Whence the love comes;—all ravage leaves that whole.
> Vainly the flesh fades; soul makes all things new.

Finally, it is on the great fact of the spiritual world that the New Testament rests. Its whole implication is there. That the visible is the vestibule of a greater invisible; that the material is symbol of the immaterial; that body is for the sake of soul; that earthly conditions are for the working out of Divine conclusions; that death is but transition; that the spirit in which we are now doing our work will show itself in consciousness a thousand ages hence; these are parts of Christ's Gospel; and these are carried also in the facts offered us to-day. Truly they are facts to ponder. And in pondering them we may ask our poet's question:

> When earth breaks up and heaven expands,
> How will the change strike me and you,
> In the house not made with hands?

IX

Religion and the Concrete

PHILOSOPHY, since Locke's day, has made a prodigious pother over the aphorism of which he, having first borrowed it from the schoolmen, made such use: "*Nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*" (the intellect holds nothing which did not come first as an appeal to the senses). Kant, starting where Locke left off, and taking his thesis as a challenge, showed how much there was in the intellect beyond the sensuous impression; how the external fact, on its way to us, took its entire shape and colour from the mental machinery that received it. But the Locke dictum, though, as we now see, it has to be taken under conditions and limitations, is one we all need to study, and especially those whose business is with the problems of religion. Religion is, first of all, a psychology; to deal with it properly, either in thought or action, we need to know the laws of the realm in which it operates. And one of the chief things to be noted in this region is the relation of the senses to the soul behind. It is to the way in which the different churches have understood this relation, a good deal more than from this or that dogma they have handled, that they owe their success or their failure.

The point is this—that before we can get effectively at a man's reason or his conscience, we have to touch his senses. Our neighbour is a being who first of all sees, hears, tastes and feels. And his inner life consists in largest degree of memories, mental pictures, of things he has seen, heard, tasted and felt. The abstractions of the philosopher are a later development, quite out of range of masses of men, and even to the most cultured—as personal experiment will easily show—far less operative and powerful than the fact that impinges on the senses. Compare the impression on a man of any general proposition you can frame with the announcement to him that he is to be hanged to-morrow, or that some one has left him a fortune, and you will have the measure of the difference in psychical effect between the abstract and the concrete.

It is this simple truth, so obvious when we come to look at it, that opens to us, as by a magic "sesame," the secret of the world's religions. Man, to be impressed, must have first and foremost the concrete. The abstract is the latest term—at the other end of the string. The invisible must, ere we can do anything with it, be embodied in a visible. It is because of this that philosophy as such can never become a religion. Aristotle himself recognises this when, speaking of treatises on morals, he says: "The truth is they seem to have power to urge on and to excite young men of liberal minds . . . but that they have no power to persuade the multitude to what is virtuous and honourable." Your truth must become a life, be seen visibly walking about, before it can move men. The

Baptist theology of the seventeenth century is at present read by no mortal ; or, at least, by very few. But that theology, incarnated in a Greatheart, a Mr. Honest, and the other characters of Bunyan's immortal dream, has been and is the delight of millions. "For truth embodied in a tale, may enter in by lowly doors." But it must be *embodied.* That is why abstract theisms and other intangible systems have never had, and never will have, any position amongst the religions of the world.

And this brings us to the centre of our theme. Religion, which has to deal with the highest reality, can only in this matter follow the universal law. Its truth must be embodied. But that statement spells Incarnation. It is wonderful to see how, in the twentieth century, the roads of the new science, of the new culture, are found to be leading —all of them—in one and the same direction. The central truth of the New Testament shows, in the new light of this culture, as a truth embedded in the nature of things, as inevitable to the human evolution. God could never be known to man except by a self-manifestation. What He is and means could only, human nature being what it is, be exhibited by a Life. It is curious here to note how, in the view of human spiritual development which modern research is offering us, the old controversies concerning the Divinity of Christ have lost their starting-point. The rival camps are deserted, for the world has moved on. The new conception derived from history and psychology of the whole human movement, gives us at once Christ's Divinity and Humanity as the natural

expression of a cosmic process. We are here to know God and to be united with Him. And we could not have reached up to Him unless He had first reached down to us. We could not see Him unless He made Himself visible. God must come into the sphere of the concrete ere he can be apprehended of the human heart. As Ritschl puts it: "The essence of God, as it is Spirit, and Will, and especially Love, can become operative in a human Life, as man in fact is constituted for spirit, will, love." To quote Jacobi's profound word: "Nature conceals God; man reveals Him." He is in all of us, for there could be no outside revelation unless it appealed to one within. In Christ we see this eternal idea reaching its culmination. As the great Greek Father Theodore of Mopsuestia puts it: "Jesus so perfectly appropriated the Divine as to become one with it." In Him, our Ἀναξ ἀνδρῶν, our "Divinest Symbol," as Carlyle has it, we have the Divine concreted, as much of God as humanity could contain.

But the concrete in religion is far more than a doctrinal question. It enters in the most intimate way into the Church's whole method of presenting religion to the world. As we study the history of this matter and observe the different methods of appeal to the various religious bodies, we wonder continually whether it ever occurred to their leaders that there was such a thing as a psychological law in this region, whose observance or non-observance spelt success or failure? Where they have hit on the law seems so often to have been by sheer chance rather than by insight. It is clear, for instance,

that the enormous and continued power of Rome, notwithstanding the immense and ever-growing forces against her, has been owing more than anything else to an apparently unconscious following of our law. She has held men by giving them, in every direction, the concrete. It was she who introduced the picture into the churches. Her creed, however faulty we may consider it, was at all events a concrete creed, full of clear-cut statement. What has been the fascination of her Mass? Has it not been in the belief she created that here, in view of the humblest soul, was the God so thirsted after, made present and visible? The problem she sets before all competing religious bodies—a tough one, it must be confessed—is to follow her method while avoiding her impossibles; to offer a religious appeal as vivid as her own, but whose basis shall be fact and not fiction.

The Reformation Churches have been Churches of speech rather than of sign; they have sought the soul through the ear rather than the eye. But here again we have to notice that this appeal has been effective or otherwise just in proportion as the principle of the concrete has been observed or neglected. Any one who takes the trouble to study Church eloquence—the utterances of the religious orators of all ages and their effects upon men—will always find that their power has rested largely on obedience to our law. The addresses that tell are stuffed with the concrete; they are not abstract discussions, but live facts, live experiences, live pictures. The truth they wanted to enforce had always hands and feet; it lived and breathed

before men. The early Fathers had abstractions enough, but always at one end of them there was some homely, earth-born fact. Take, for example, as one out of a thousand, this extract from Alexander of Alexandria: "They suspended Him on the tree who stretches out the earth; they transfixed Him with nails who laid firm the foundations of the world; they circumscribed Him who circumscribed the heavens; they bound Him who absolves sinners; they gave Him over to the tomb who raised the dead to life." The words remind us of Hooker, who more than a millennium later speaks thus of the sacrament: "These mysteries do as nails fasten us to His very cross; that by them we draw out astonishing efficacy, force and virtue, even the blood of His gored side; in the wounds of our Redeemer we there dip our tongues, we are dyed red both within and without; our hunger is satisfied, and our thirst for ever quenched." We are discussing here, be it remembered, not the doctrine but the method. The words quoted may easily offend our taste or our philosophy, or both. The point is that they offer in religious speech the example, followed by all the great pleaders from Chrysostom to Spurgeon, of discourse in which spiritual truth is clothed in concrete forms that appeal to every man's senses and imagination.

The lessons from all this are tolerably obvious. The religion of to-day must in all its departments fill itself with the concrete. The preacher must have his grasp upon facts, upon experiences, upon life. His business is with the invisible, but unless he can turn his invisibles into visibles—condense his cloud

into rain—he is of no use in the pulpit. In like manner the Church, in its collective operations, has to master the same art. It must learn to embody its aspirations, its enthusiasms, its faith, into institutions and organisms which catch the world's eye and compel its attention. The engineer builds his creed into his bridge. The Church must build hers into something as evident and as useful.

But the greatest of all concretes is man himself. He is full of mysteries, of invisibles, the secret of which he cannot fathom. The end of all the ages is there hidden within him. Could he but understand himself he would understand God and the Universe. He is a vast embodied idea. But the idea needs clarifying, unifying. The supreme effort of religion is to accomplish this for him. It seeks to incarnate its own spirit in him. Christianity in the creed, Christianity in the institution, are nothing in effective force compared with Christianity alive in the man. Darwin found in the South Sea Islanders, transformed by missionary effort, an argument for Christianity such as he had met nowhere in books. The Church, whatever its name be called, which succeeds best in making the New Testament faith and love concrete in human lives, will be the Church of the future.

X

Doctrine and Life

HAS modern society a genuine and definable doctrine of life? Has it, that is to say, a practical creed, which it entirely believes, and by which it seeks to shape its conduct? The question, it will be remembered, was directly raised in the famous "Do we Believe?" controversy, which occupied the columns of a leading London daily some time ago. In the letter which started the discussion, the writer placed the formulated doctrines of orthodox Christianity in direct and vivid contrast with the maxims by which, as he asserted, modern society regulates its practice. The inference was that a gulf separated the two; that society's orthodoxy was a pose, if not an hypocrisy; that the creed which it repeated in church was quite other than the one by which it worked and lived. The public answer to this challenge was of a very varied character, but one thing clearly revealed in it was the confusion on the subject which prevails in the general mind. The same condition is shown in the attitude to religious education. The Englishman met by the question, "What is the religious teaching you wish for your children?" is puzzled for a reply. He is not quite

sure what, on these matters, he believes himself. We do not propose here—that would be too presumptuous—to supply him with his answer. But, as a help in that direction, it may be worth while to study an anterior and closely allied theme. Before we talk of this or that doctrine we need to know something about the nature of doctrine in itself, and its actual relation to life.

The subject, when looked into, divides, we find, into two separate departments. There is, for one thing, the relation of the doctrinal system we profess to our individual life and conduct, and for another the relation of our system, or any system, to life itself as a cosmic process. The two departments, as we shall see, are intimately allied, but the results they offer are entirely distinct.

The doctrinal systems with which we are most familiar are, of course, those of the Christian Churches. As we contemplate these structures—the massive thought-monuments of Christendom, standing up so clear and so majestic out of the mists and the wrecks of the past—we receive an impression of passive and immobile strength. "*Semper Eadem*" is the motto engraven on their front. Enduring without change, amid the passing of dynasties and kingdoms, they remind us of some Alp or Apennine, lifting its eternal summit in sublime contrast with the hurry and swift wasting of the human crowds below.

The illustration might indeed be used, but its lesson is different from the one we have suggested. The great creed-systems are like the mountains; but it is not immobility, rather the opposite of it,

in which their likeness consists. It is precisely because "the everlasting hills" are everlasting only in appearance that they resemble so closely the theologic ranges which dominate from their heights the thoughts of men. Nowhere than in the mountains, though we call them our monuments of eternity, can we study better the constant flux of all visible things. Your Alp changes from year to year. There is no moment when the winds, the frosts, the rains, the summer heats are not leaving their mark upon it. The Matterhorn, most impregnable apparently of rock fortresses, is really, as Tyndall called it, a huge ruin. Geologists say that our Snowdon is only a remnant of itself. Its original mass, which lifted it once to twenty thousand feet of height, is now strewn over Wales and Western England.

This beat of the elements upon the mountains represents, we say, in some degree, though not entirely, the process which our doctrinal systems are undergoing. These also, while meant by their builders to be final, belong to a sphere where there is no finality. Indeed, the law of change here is more rapid, and more certain in its operations, than upon a Helvellyn or a Mont Blanc. The attack upon the hills is mainly an external one. The thought-hills, on the other hand, while subject to impacts of that kind, are exposed to a process far more rapidly and inevitably disintegrating. They are exposed to a constant movement from within.

To explain that we need now to ask ourselves the question, "What is doctrine?" It is somewhat odd that in the multitude of controversies

which rage round this theme, so few seem to have made for themselves that preliminary but all-important inquiry. If we examine the matter scientifically—that is to say, by study of the manner in which doctrine, in the instances known to us, has arisen, and of the manner in which it has assumed its particular form, we reach a formula which seems to cover the entire field. Doctrine, we find, is the answer of the inner spirit to the outside fact. It is the response of the collective consciousness of a given age to its experiences. The doctrines of the Christian Church, for instance, are the echo of the impressions made on the first disciples by the historical Christ, and the circumstances of His life and death. But with these two factors before us, the outside fact and the inner mind, as the builders of doctrine, we at once perceive the opening to vast and inevitable change.

For whatever may be said of the outside fact, the mind of man, which perceives and registers its impression of it, is, we know, constantly on the move. And the interpretation of the fact varies with that movement. Thousands of years ago men looked on the sun, moon and stars that we know. But the theory they formed of them was very different from ours. And the facts whose interpretation constitutes religious belief cannot be divorced from this law of change. The witnesses of nineteen hundred years ago, who give us their impressions of Judæan happenings then, saw them in a light and through mental instruments quite other than the light and mind of to-day. And the question which here thrusts itself on us is as to

whether, on the impossible supposition that our instructed mentality had been in Judæa at that time to report, it would have rendered any such account of those happenings as that we now possess? What, in fact, criticism is now doing, as a kind of second best to a first-hand report of that kind, is to reconstruct those early impressions of the first believers in the light of our modern knowledge.

It is under this process of the mind that the doctrinal systems of the past are wearing down and altering their aspect. They are great and venerable; but life, that subtle, all-creating force—life, which sends perpetually its new pulses into the human soul, is greater still, and will have its way. What the Church has to do is at last to recognise this simple fact. It has to recognise in its relation to old-world interpretations, the law of the inner spirit which ever expands and ever clarifies its view. Its failure to do this in the past; its ignoring, in this matter, of one of the ultimate cosmic laws, is at the root of the present confusions, and the explanation of the intellectual bankruptcy of the older Churches. What it has brought Romanism to is pathetically expressed in the lament of Cardinal Guibert, who, as far back as 1870, wrote thus of his Church in France: "We Christians form a society, a people apart, which, no longer being in communion of ideas with the immense society which surrounds us, is becoming disintegrated, and is, in fact, in full process of dissolution. It is a world nearing its end." Surely that world of the Romanist ideas *is* coming to an end and we can now see the entire *rationale* of the process!

What, then, is the position and the value of religious doctrine? Does this element of change invalidate it? Is there no doctrine which can be spoken of as inspired, as of Divine authority? Let us, in reply, bear in mind all the elements of the question. In dealing, as we have just done, with the action of the mind, we touch, let us remember, only one of the factors. In addition there remains that other, the outside fact or happening, which first set the mind in motion. The sun, we said, is different to us from what it was to our ancestors. But it is still the sun, and a bigger fact than it was to them. Their view of it also had as much reality in it as was adequate to their mental condition. It was such an approximation to reality as was congruous to their general growth.

In like manner, the facts, the events that form the basis of Christian doctrine are still there; and assuredly not diminished in their religious significance because of the growth of the percipient mind! And whatever modification may come to those earlier explanations, there will, we may confidently assert, be no change in the peculiar appeal which the facts themselves make to the human spirit. We find here a correspondence not lightly to be got rid of, whose importance grows the more we consider it, between what has happened in history and certain primal elements of the soul. The soul asks for a moral explanation of the universe, and it is this which Christianity supplies. Its spiritual explanation is, we say, precisely the thing that humanity insistently demands. It asks for a solution which science acknowledges its entire

impotence to give. As Sabatier puts it, "Science will never tell us, outside an act of faith, why life is to be lived well." Herbert Spencer is of the same mind. In one of his latest utterances he recognises that religious creeds "occupy the sphere which material interpretation seeks to occupy, and fails the more it seeks." The latest philosophy admits that the intellect alone is incapable of holding or representing the entire truth of life. The deepest things in us are moral and spiritual impulses which cannot be put into an equation or a syllogism.

And corresponding with this attitude and need of the mind, history—and especially the New Testament record—offers us personalities and events through which there gleam suggestions and hints of a transcendental order, behind the phenomenal world, which the soul's highest aspirations leap to recognise. The creeds are the charts and maps of this spiritual realm. The draughtsmen were, if we will, clumsy and ill-informed, but the realm they sketched was there. We may revise their drawings, but the reality they outlined is as big and as rich as ever.

Between doctrine and life there will be ever that sort of antagonism which subsists between greater and less. It is like the battle of sea and shore. We fence in our plot of the idea; we wall it off from the outside savage and untamed material universe, as men build embankments against the Atlantic. Again and again man has awaked to find this outer ocean, mute, vast and terrible, invading his defences and sweeping away his structures of granite. For a moment he despairs;

the world is too great, too subtle, too savage as it seems for his soul. But the miracle here is that the Power which deals thus with him will not permit his despair. It tells him that land and sea together are his. Let him build on the one and embark on the other. Each has its treasure for him; each shall help him to his final kingdom.

Doctrine and Life.—II.

With the topic opened in this way, we can now proceed to some of the other problems which it offers to the religious thought of our time. One of the lessons of the past which the Church by this time should have thoroughly learned is the folly of claiming for itself a monopoly of doctrine. In earlier ages it aspired to be the universal provider. It was not content with teaching the things it knew. It taught also all the things it did not know. Worst of all, it proclaimed its ignorance as the infallible and final truth, which it was heresy and spiritual destruction to deny. Its arrogance has been boundless. It claimed at one time to have even a special artistic inspiration, which put the painter and sculptor, in their own department, in the second place to the ecclesiastic. There is a Council decree on record which declared that the painter should have to do only with the execution of a picture, the holy fathers guarding it as their province to invent and dictate! The Church long ago retreated from that position, but it still fails to see that its right to offer the world a theological

cosmogony is equally unfounded. We look to-day with curiosity on a decree such as that of the Council of Carthage, which denounced an anathema on those "who say that man was created mortal, and would have died even though he had not fallen." But in our churches we have it still read out as a reason for keeping Sunday, that "in six days the Lord created the heavens and the earth." That the Church calmly goes on announcing this and similar statements, knowing that nobody believes them, is one of the religious dangers of our time. To stake its authority on declarations which are not true, is surely the best possible way of earning discredit for the part of its teaching which *is* true and vitally important.

But it is time to turn to some other features of our theme. In studying doctrine and life we discern two opposing positions; one in which doctrine is above the life, and the other in which life is above the doctrine. It will be worth while to examine them both. Of the former position Christianity offers us some of the most striking examples. It has been one of the constant reproaches against the New Testament that it offers a rule of life which is impossible and unreal. The Sermon on the Mount is, we are told, not "practical politics." It is a dream-legislation, fitted for the other side of the moon rather than for London and New York. But the objection here is not really serious. It ignores a fundamental law of the human spirit. Humanity progresses by a series of anticipatory projections of its highest self, which it then sets itself laboriously to realise. It sees its

mountain summit in one glance of the eye. How many thousand thousand movements of its weary limbs will it take to reach it? Man has ever been flinging out his great ideals; it is the law of his nature to do so. All the legislators have had them. Plato's Republic and More's Utopia have never been translated into act, but they have been an inspiration from one generation to another. As M. Fouillée puts it: "The ideal is but the deepest sense and the anticipation of future reality." The hitherto seen but unreached is surely coming. That the New Testament life is still floating as a vision above the world's practice is one of its best credentials. It is not the opportunist scheme of a day, but the prophecy and moving force of all time. That is an illuminating statement of Wernle where, dealing with the Early Church, he says: "From the very first there was a sharp distinction between the Christianity that was actually lived in the Churches, and the Christianity which the teachers of the Church postulated in their writings. That which is called worldliness did not make its way into Christianity through decline from some high level of excellence. It came through the mission itself as each new convert brought in a portion of the world along with him." Man's doctrine is to his soul what sun and sky are to his body. Far beyond him in the heavens, it is nevertheless irreversibly linked to his destiny. From its height it is ever his nourisher and inspirer.

But there is another aspect of this disparity about which a different language has to be held. The one just noticed arises from the human limi-

tation and normal rate of progress. But history and contemporary life offer us the spectacle of aberrations which exhibit not so much slowness as perversity; where doctrine is used not as a helper of right conduct, but rather as a substitute for it. Nowhere has human ingenuity shown itself more vividly or more deplorably than in its exploitation of orthodoxy in the interests of immorality. Man, most amazing of creatures, has concluded an alliance between theft and the creed. Your Sicilian bandit will pistol you in the name of the Church. The most entertaining part of the memoirs of that scoundrel of genius, Benvenuto Cellini, is the description of his pious raptures, preceded and followed, as if in perfect sequence, with the accounts of his assassinations and debaucheries. The fashion here has been a world-wide one. Lord Melbourne, on hearing a sermon which dealt closely with character, is reported to have said, "No one has a more sincere respect for the Church than I have, but things have come to a pretty pass when religion is allowed to invade the sphere of private life!" Laurence Oliphant, dealing with the financial crash in New York in 1873, writes: "Founders of theological seminaries, secretaries to charitable associations, and the leading elders of various denominations are among the principal defaulters. . . . There is scarcely an instance of a prominent fraudulent bankrupt who has not made a show of piety the mask under which he ensnared his victims." The theological system which permits this is near its end. Nay, its day as an effective force is already over. It is not only dead but corrupt, and we

may welcome the earthquake which buries it out of sight. How heaven-high above all this is that word of neo-platonist Porphyry, who told the Christians and non-Christians of his time that "it is a man's actions that naturally afford demonstration of his opinions; and whoever holds a belief must live in accordance with it, in order that he may himself be a faithful witness to the hearers of his words!"

Let us come now to the opposite position; the one, namely, where the life is above the professed doctrine. There are few conditions more suggestive than this, or that contain more singular problems. What society continually offers us is the spectacle of people owning a creed whose crudity in parts revolts us, but whose nature reflects none of this crudity; whose life throughout is high and beautiful. Christianity has abounded in these characters. What notions have haunted the sweetest souls! We think of Aquinas, as noble a man as the middle ages produced, actually writing that the joys of the saints would be augmented by watching the tortures of the damned! And in our own time Greg's complaint that "the Churches have too generally proclaimed a hell too horrible to be believed in, and a heaven too dull to be desired," has had too abundant foundation. The ideas and the life have been so oddly associated! Mr. Moncure Conway, in his autobiography, tells of a negro woman, "Becky," "whose humour, humility, and simplicity and indefinable qualities that I never knew in any white person, made her to me a revelation." "Becky" was a devout

Methodist, with theological views that, stated on paper, would have been regarded by Mr. Conway as narrow indeed. But her religion, he assures us, was delightful.

What account have we to give of this anomaly? Much might be said, for half the history and the mystery of human nature is here. What these stories show for one thing is that the unconscious in us is so much greater than the conscious, that the unformulated—or shall we say the soul behind the formula?—transcends the formula to so infinite a degree. And it is the soul, so essentially divine in us, working behind the mere brain-reasonings, that from out of the written creed has, with infallible instinct, selected and absorbed the essential, and left the accidental and the inferior to lie on the rubbish-heap outside. Men have found their religion as a treasure hid in a field. The field is wide and weedy, its soil largely a poor soil. But the treasure makes it an invaluable acquisition. Schopenhauer had all manner of criticisms of Christianity. But when he declared that "it was reserved for Christianity to theoretically formulate and to expressly advance loving-kindness, not only as a virtue, but as queen of all, and to extend it even to enemies," he had touched the spot. There was the treasure. The Emperor Julian, in his sneer at the Gospel, said, "What folly to erect fishermen into theologians!" But there was one thing about the Galilæan fisher-theology which confounded him. After his attempt to produce a charitable movement in the paganism he favoured, he exclaimed, "It is a scandal that the Galilæans should support

the destitute, not only of their religion, but of ours!"

There the murder was out! The creed of the fishermen contained endless material for attack. But this something behind, which filled the people's hearts and set them on every deed of nobleness and sacrifice, where was the weapon that could reach that? Thus has it ever been. The body of religion may change and decay, but its soul ever lives, and immortally renews itself. Men formulate their theory of Calvary, of Atonement; they form and re-form it. Meanwhile, amid all the varying presentments of it, the Cross draws men; until at last it is dawning upon us that it is not the theories at all that have been the attraction, but the treasure that is hid deep in the wood of Calvary's tree, even the love of God which passeth knowledge.

The subject, as thus passed under review, has now yielded us its main results. The soul has been in every age the organ of Divine revelation, and it is still performing its function. The spiritual universe enlarges continually to our eye with the growth of our power of vision. And as in the physical cosmos, so in the spiritual, the change of view produced by our wider knowledge is a change not from greater to less, but ever from more to more.

XI

Life's Accumulations

THE cumulative process may be said to be the secret of the universe, the plan on which its whole organisation has proceeded. It was in operation long before we came on the scene—was, in fact, the means by which we became possible. The geologic times were times of storing. It took six hundred thousand years to lay a coal bed. That was Nature's leisurely way of stocking our cellar. The further man investigates his planet the vaster becomes the inventory of this wonderful storehouse. The point to be noted here is that the development of the world's riches synchronises in a subtle but perfectly exact way with man's own development. It is precisely as he becomes rich inwardly that he becomes rich outwardly. The savage treads century after century his wilderness, and remains a savage in a wilderness. The civilised man comes along and finds in the wilderness an El Dorado. The knowledge within him weds the possibilities outside until it fills the land with wonders. And this process never stops. Man finds the outside always a match for his inside. His universe grows perpetually with his growth,

becomes daily richer as his mind is enriched. Let him reach an archangel's dimensions, and still his cosmic dwelling-place will stretch beyond him, immeasureable in its immensity, exhaustless in its wealth.

What we want to deal with specially here, however, is not so much the outside storehouse as this other entity that stands over against it, the human soul. That, too, is a storehouse to whose contents we are perpetually adding. Life, as it beats in our brain and heart, is an enigma whose ultimate solution we are never likely to reach ; but we are, bit by bit, picking up suggestive fragments of information concerning it. On this subject of accumulation, for instance, our age has made a discovery of vast significance. It is in this respect, we find, on another plane from the accumulations of the outside world. In that region—the region of matter and force—the total amount is always constant. You pile up matter in one direction, you diminish it to the same extent in another. You may change your matter into various forms ; you may exhibit your force now as electricity, now as heat, now as motion ; but neither in the one nor the other will you make any difference to the amount. But the scientist who reaches his certainties in this sphere has no such result to record in his analysis of life. Its laws are not those of either matter or force. You cannot convert them into it, or it into them. Related to them in a thousand intimate ways, using them as its instruments, clothing itself in the garments they weave, it is, nevertheless, not of them. It belongs, so

science now admits, to another sphere, and is governed by other laws.

We can trace some of its methods of operation as we feel our way into this matter of accumulation. The outstanding feature at the beginning is that, so far as we can ascertain, there is no limit to the possible supply of life. Whence it derives ultimately we cannot say; but the source seems inexhaustible. The one condition of its action—a condition which is frequently an impediment—is the quality of the organ. But a counterbalancing point here, and of the highest importance, is that the organ constantly grows by a proper use of it. Function, the modern physiologist says, creates structure; and the higher the structure, the richer the flow of the life. The process is visible in every man we meet. In all of them the inner life is creating the outward structure. In the thinker the daily habit drives the blood to the brain; in the blacksmith the blood goes to the arm; in the sensualist the blood feeds the stomach and the rest of his animal appetites. And in all these directions, according as our will directs the flow of the nutrifying blood, the separate structures will gain new powers, in which the life will concentrate itself; in which its resources will accumulate for higher or lower, for good or ill. Development of character, stated physiologically, lies in this, that the soul's inner motions, repeated and continued, tend to create organisms which work with an ever cumulative effect.

Life as an accumulator works in mysterious, baffling ways. Often it will store up for long

antecedent periods the materials that are finally to exhibit themselves on the great scale in one commanding personality. It took generations of obscure musicians to produce finally a Bach, a Rossini, a Beethoven. The current runs underground for far distances until finally its hidden forces burst up in some mighty geyser-fountain, towering heaven high. There were generations of Wesleys, all full of character, but when we speak of "Wesley" we know the one we mean. Patrick Brontë, in his gloomy moorland parish, cherished a world of thought and passion in his stern, silent nature. It was his daughters who gave it vent in "Jane Eyre" and "Wuthering Heights." Our separate personality is, indeed, the greatest puzzle in the world. We can never apportion its boundaries; so little of it is ours, so much a borrowing from the man before us.

> Young children gather as their own
> The harvest that the dead have sown—
> The dead, forgotten and unknown.

But not less striking is life's cumulative process as seen in a single career. Nature seems here to proceed on a kind of power-grade system. She allows us to stumble along at a certain level for a time, longer or shorter according to our diligence and faculty, and then, suddenly as it seems, lifts us to another plane. She effects a "remove," in school phraseology, to a higher form. The writer who has been vacillating from one borrowed style to another, from Johnson to Stevenson, at last finds himself in possession of one of his own.

He has discovered himself, and that is the moment when the world discovers him. The same thing holds of the singer, the speaker, the scientific discoverer. Every man who knows his work and faithfully keeps him to it is aware of these Nature-promotions. Are we strenuous and faithful? We shall hear from time to time her whisper in the ear, "Come up higher!"

That is by no means the only way in which life's accumulations serve the worker. The true man casts his word, his deed, day by day, into the humming world outside, and finds afterwards—if the word be true and the deed brave enough—that these have become mighty co-workers. His deed of the past is the chief reinforcement of the deed of the present. What he says now is, may be, in itself no truer or stronger than what he said twenty years ago, but how much farther it carries! The ancients used to attach a mystic power to certain names. All their schemes of sorcery were built on the potency of names. In primitive religions the name carried a mysterious relationship to the nature and fortune of the bearer. To pronounce the name of a god or a demon was to invoke an awesome, swiftly-working power. These ideas were the primitive clothing of a deep truth. We state it differently to-day, but this power of the name is, to us as much as to the ancients, a leading factor in affairs. It is one of the chief results of life's cumulative process. A great name is the concentration of a career. It is the essence of a man's million deeds. As the man stands there, a Wellington at Waterloo, a Nelson flying his Trafalgar

signal, he is, in effective force upon his followers, the man of to-day, plus all he has been and done in ten thousand yesterdays.

It is time to draw some lessons from this theme. One is that of the proper art of accumulating. When we turn out our rooms, our libraries, we are continually astonished at the rubbish we have allowed to gather, rubbish that has crowded out so much better things. The life record shows often worse than that of the rooms. The supreme effort here should be to gather and find house-room for the best only. It is thus we can make life interesting to the last moment. Some of the chief occupations of to-day are occupations which store nothing. What inner accumulation comes from spending six nights in the week at bridge? There are worse pursuits than this, whose storage department is for ailments, diseases, and chagrins. Seneca in his treatise on the "Brevity of Life" bids us review our days and years: "Say how often you have allowed them to be stolen by a creditor, a mistress, a patron, a client; how many people have been allowed to pillage your life while you were not even aware you were being robbed!" Diderot wrote on the margin of his copy: "I have never read this chapter without blushing; it is my history." It is the history of a good many more.

A scientific ordering of life, we repeat, will be largely a science of accumulations. We shall settle with ourselves what things are to be sought and retained, and what treated as negligible. The strange thing is to see the eagerness for lumber. Cicero asks if anything can be more absurd than,

in proportion as less of our journey remains, to seek a greater supply of provisions. And pagan Porphyry, a far better Christian, surely, than many in the Church, gives us the true sense of the matter in that letter to his wife where he bids her lay up the things that can be carried into the world beyond, instead of being solicitous about what will have to be left behind. How striking is the Persian motto, "The bricks are made on earth with which to build our heavenly palace"; and that saying in the Laws of Manu, "For after death neither father, nor mother, nor son, nor wife, nor relatives are his companions: his virtue alone remains with him." These souls of the early world, seekers after God, whose earnestness shames our indifference, knew well the lesson of our theme. They saw life as continuous, death as a liberation, and the realm beyond as a sphere where the spiritual accumulations of the present would be built into the structure of eternity.

XII

Past and Present

It is interesting to note how the questions which agitate religious minds to-day are related to certain other questions which lie deeper down. Amongst these " problems of the rear " there is, perhaps, none wider in its reach, or bearing more vitally upon our other solutions, than that of the connection between past and present. Whatever be the immediate controversy in view, whether it be the revision of a creed, the observance of Sunday, the authority of a Church, we see how immediately and inevitably the modern mind, on its way to a conclusion, finds itself faced by this prior consideration. For all these matters, we discover, resolve themselves into a mandate of the past to the present. The Church, the creed, the observance are the call of the past on our obedience. But what is our connection with the past ? What do we owe to it ? Why should we obey it ? It is an illustration of the essentially mystical nature of human life that such questions should be possible. How destructive of the commonplace, of the materialistic idea of our existence, if only we come to think of it, that every one of us is at each moment, and at each point of

his being, pressed, magically wrought upon, and at times completely enthralled by this invisible something, dead, we say, yet most mysteriously alive, which we call the Past!

One could well linger on that side of the theme, for it is one of infinite suggestion; but our concern is now with the more practical aspect we have raised. How stand we to-day, in matters of religion and conduct, to the past? Are we its pupils or its masters? Is there such a thing as a possible clean slate, an ignoring of what is gone, and an absolutely fresh start? Or did the world in some bygone age receive its marching orders, which are valid for all time? We, of course, are not the first to ask such questions. The eighteenth century rang with them. The French Revolution had as one of its watchwords the sovereign rights of the present as against all previous ages. "Death," cries Camille Desmoulins, "extinguishes all rights. It is for us who now exist, who are now in possession of this planet, to give the law to it in our turn." That is the essentially revolutionary idea. It did immense things a hundred years ago, and it will do more yet. How vigorous it is in our time and amongst ourselves is, perhaps, nowhere better evidenced than in these lines of William Watson, written for Christmas Day:

> Fated among time's fallen leaves to stray,
> We breathe an air that savours of the tomb,
> Heavy with dissolution and decay;
> Waiting till some new world-emotion rise
> And with the shattering might of a simoom
> Sweep clear this dying Past that never dies.

The poet here, undoubtedly, interprets the secret thought of many minds. It is time clearly we all of us, whether believers or non-believers, set ourselves strenuously to the business of ascertaining, if we can, our actual position in regard to this theme. It may turn out that both sides, the revolutionaries and the conservators, have more to say for themselves than we have hitherto imagined, and that to the final solution both will be equal contributors.

On our way to that solution it has to be noted, first of all, that the matter has a transcendental side, which neither party can afford to ignore. The modern mind is a believer in progress, in evolution, and in the consequent superiority of to-day over yesterday. But if we believe in a God, in a pre-existent Absolute Being, from whom all things have come, and in whom all things consist, we realise that our notion of progress must be a purely relative one. For there has always been something better than our best. The past has contained a quality of being which has surpassed infinitely our greatest ideas. If we take the matter on Spinoza's lines, and think of God as Eternal Substance, with the two attributes of extension and thought, the conclusion is the same. It is here, indeed, that we reach that concept of religion which Schleiermacher has so finely developed in the "Reden": "It is the seeking and finding of the Universal Being in all that lives and moves, in all becoming and change, in all action and suffering. It is to have and to know, in immediate feeling, life itself as the infinite and eternal life." This sense

of the transcendency of the Eternal, as including the whole relation of past and present, has possessed certain nations and ages far more than others. It has been the ruling thought of India, with the result that India is full of metaphysics and has no history!

It is not, however, this aspect of our question which chiefly occupies the Western mind to-day. What men everywhere are demanding, as a matter of immediate practical moment, is a statement of our proper relation, not to the metaphysical but to the *historical* past, and of our obligations towards it. Have the bygone ages, with their Scriptures, their creeds, their Church institutions, any right to command us? Must we on the subjects they deal with take their view rather than our own? Are we necessarily conditioned by what these people did and said? Are we not as good as they, or better, both for opinion and for practice? May we not cut clear from their tracks, and sail off on a voyage of our own? Questions of this order, formulated or unformulated, in the front of men's minds, or lying away in their brain's back-chambers, form part of the revolt of our time.

About one part of the answer there is no doubt. So far as the facts of the past are concerned, there is no room for revolt. The facts are there, and not Omnipotence itself could put them out of the way. And in certain respects these facts are all-powerful. That the world has come about in such a way as it has; that history has taken the course it did take; that such a thing as Christianity, with its

Founder, its institutions, the beliefs to which it has given rise, is actually there—these are a piece of the past which no dialectic, no iconoclasm can get rid of if it would. And none of us, whatever our mental attitude, can for a moment disassociate ourselves from the influence these facts exert. That we are in the twentieth century means there are nineteen Christian centuries behind us, every one of which is living in our pulses to-day. When our revolutionaries talk of their "clean slate," they need to be reminded of these elementary points. It is no good quarrelling with our universe. It has conducted its business after this fashion, and will go on doing it without asking our leave. And a part of its method clearly is the enforcement upon the present of this tremendous energy of the actual past.

But here, upon the other side, comes in a consideration which restores to our revolutionist a great deal of what he seems to have yielded. For while the past thus acts on us, we with not less energy, react upon the past. The facts, the things that have happened are there. But the human spirit has this quality, that it can change to an indefinite degree its views of them, the use it makes of them, its whole attitude towards them. As illustration of what we mean, take the facts involved in our modern geology. They were there precisely as they exist to-day through all the generations of our forefathers. Yet when we consider the elements involved here—these strata, with their formations, their fossils, the story they contain in their relation to the human mind, may we not say

that the rocks themselves, so hard and stubborn, have to-day changed before our eyes! Certainly they are no longer to us what they were to our fathers. They are fitted into a new frame; they recite a new history; they offer to us a thousand suggestions of which our fathers never dreamed. Thus in this sphere the past changes as the mind changes. The present is here seen to control the past by touching it with instruments which open new meanings.

It is on precisely analogous lines that the mind of to-day is proceeding, in dealing with that other past, of the facts which constitute religious history. It is along this line we discover that the religion of the future, while absolutely faithful to everything in the spiritual sphere that has happened on our planet, will, nevertheless, undergo as complete a transformation as geology has wrought in our science of the rocks. In both instances we have a concrete mass—of solid rock here, of solid history there. In both instances we have brought to bear on this concrete a magic of research, of the mind's better insight, which in the one as in the other makes all things new. In both realms the whole question is, we see, of the interpretation of our facts, of the use we make of them, of the cosmic framework into which we fit them.

It is at this point we have finally to recognise, with our revolutionary, that the present is, indeed, master of the past, and not its slave. The prophetic minds have ever gone on this assumption. It was the attitude of Jesus. He was crucified for being a Revolutionary, for believing that there was a

greater inspiration living then in His soul than was to be found in any old-world writings. The orthodoxy of the day pored over the scrolls of the synagogue as the only authentic message from the heavens. The Man of Nazareth, with His "But I say unto you," instead proclaimed for ever the rights of progressive revelation. It is precisely as men have followed Him here, precisely as they have caught the new note for their time, and fearlessly uttered it, that they have become of use to their generation. They were here witnessing to that supremest of all truths for us, that God's book of life is for ever in the making, and is by no means finished yet.

It is on this view of the right relations of past and present that our whole religious thought in the future must proceed. When Pascal declared that the human race was, in its totality, as an individual, ever growing and ever learning, he uttered a truth whose implications went further probably than even he himself perceived. For it proclaims the newest mind as ever the oldest and the most experienced mind. The race is older with each generation, and knows more. And its new knowledge is always a fresh chapter of the human Scripture. When men generally have perceived this there will be surcease for ever of the pitiful spectacle of religious minds tormenting themselves and others with notions of God, man and the future derived from the childhood of the world. It will be seen that we are on an ascending scale of height and vision, and that the view open to us is more trustworthy than that of men for their time truly inspired, but who his-

torically and evolutionarily were lower down on the road. The past is ours not for our enslavement, but for our use, for our learning, for means of conquering a vaster future. No less than this is involved in our belief in God the Living Spirit. With Vinet we hold that "the Reformation is ever permanent in the Church even as Christianity. It is Christianity restoring itself by its own inherent strength. So that even to-day the Reformation is still a thing to be done, a thing ever to be recommenced, and for which Luther and Calvin only prepared a smoother and broader way."

XIII

When it is Heaven

Lamb, writing to Wordsworth, on receiving from the poet a copy of his just issued "Excursion," declared the reading of it had given him "a day of Heaven." There may have been a friendly exaggeration in the words, but, all the same, one reads them with pleasure. That such words are in the language is in itself suggestive. Their significance deepens when we remember that they stand for a truth, for a valid experience. This word "heaven" has been coined out of human life. It would never have been here apart from what men have felt and seen. In its religious use it points mainly to transcendental ideas, to a world beyond this; but it would be entirely without meaning were it not for things we know of the life here and now. Men believe in a heaven yonder because they have already found a heaven closer at hand. They remember elect times when the consciousness has been lifted to its highest, when the soul has tasted its noblest satisfactions, and has revelled in the bliss of the good and of the beautiful. With some these moments are too few; to some they come never at all. Faust, in one of

the scenes with Mephistopheles, is willing to wager his soul if the tempter can procure him a moment of which he can really say, "*Verweile doch, du bist so schön.*" He is sure there is no moment so perfect that he could wish it to stay. But Faust was in a bad state. There are myriads of such moments; and when our race has developed further towards its true dimensions and its true goal there will be myriads more. That man has reached the idea of all this, that he has had fleetingest sense of his true joy is a pledge of what is to come. It is the sailor's glimpse from the wave top; a vision of land which no subsequent tossings or fog bewilderments can henceforth disprove.

It is the healthiest of exercises to turn the mind to this side of its experiences. "Life is twice lived," says the Roman poet, "in the enjoyment of our past." The sunshine of those soul-festivals will irradiate the darkest sky, and give it promise of better to-morrows. As we look back we realise through what different gateways our heaven has opened upon us. How often, to begin with, has nature filled us to the very full! There are diviner scenes on this earth than any apocalypse has pictured. And the remembrance comes back to us of the rapture beyond words with which we have gazed upon them. The present writer can never forget the sensations of one summer day when, solitary amongst the mountains of the Grisons, he was held as in a trance by the scene before him. The magical hues of the atmosphere playing over the far-stretched valleys and lower heights, the blue of the cloudless sky, the hush upon all nature

seemed supernatural; while the vista of mighty peaks, virginal in their snowy whiteness, soaring into the very heavens, seemed visibly to link our world to a fairer universe beyond. One had seen the mountains before; for years the view of them had daily fed the eye, but never before or since has there been in contemplation of them such a quality of feeling. It was as though the utmost essence of all that was beautiful had suddenly passed into the soul. There was nothing for it but worship. It was heaven.

At other times the soul reaches these heights in human fellowship. There has been nothing more lovely in history, and nothing more potent, than those groups and circles of eager souls, that in every age have formed round some great spirit, athirst for the truth and grace it distilled. That is why men left home and business for the society of Jesus. To follow Him was the divinest of luxuries. In this fellowship men tasted life's choicest fruit. Fed with such words, such tones, their inmost nature vibrating with such harmonies, men felt that poverty, homelessness, persecution, were no hardship. They tasted through all that inner joy which, as Matthew Arnold has it, overflowed upon the world and was their secret of its conquest. It has always been so. In every age we see the mysterious attraction, surpassing all others, of the prophet and his circle. Now it is Origen, whose disciples declare that in his presence there is "perpetual sunlight," and "the inspiration of divine things"; later it is Bernard fleeing into the wilderness, pursued by young knights, who give up

arms and the world for his society; again it is Francis at Assisi, making men realise that absolute poverty, *plus* his companionship, was a wealth beyond that of pope or emperor. It is under the same instinct that further on in those mediæval times we have formed the *Gottesfreunde*, circles of brethren who, outside the ceremonies of the popular religion, seek together for deeper spiritual realisations. The Methodist circles with their marvellous store of ecstatic feeling are the *Gottesfreunde* of the eighteenth century. Under far different circumstances, but illustrating the same instinct, is that circle at La Chenaie, where Lamennais gathers around him in religious retreat such choice spirits as Maurice de Guérin, Rohrbacher, Montalembert, and Lacordaire. And not only has it been among the *élite* that exquisite emotion of this kind has been known. In humble gatherings of unnoted men and women, in conventicles and bare rooms, the heart has been caught by the Spirit's deepest tides, and unspeakable things realised. "This is heaven," has been the common thought. The experience of these people has borne witness to the great saying of Hegel in his "Philosophy of Religion": "All the various peoples feel that it is in the religious consciousness they possess truth, and they have always regarded religion as constituting their true dignity and the Sabbath of their life."

It is along lines that are strictly parallel with the religious consciousness, though not generally regarded as immediately connected with it, that the mind finds other experiences that give it the noblest expansions. One of these is great music. We are

not at the bottom yet of all the soul's subtle alliances. We are sure, however, that harmony, as it expresses itself in sound, is flesh and blood relation to whatsoever is highest in us. Plato saw this when he associated music so closely with education in virtue. Browning has put it all into three lines where, in "Pauline," he speaks of

> Music, which is earnest of a heaven,
> Seeing we know emotions strange by it,
> Not else to be revealed.

Who that has heard the great Fribourg organ, or sat at the feet of Joachim, or listened (as we did once in boyhood—enraptured hour!) to Thalberg, but has felt at moments that this too was heaven, the heart's heaven, filled to the full so that it could hold no more!

But often man's heaven reaches him without any external aids whatever. It comes to him sometimes in dreams. There are experiences here, at rare intervals it may be, of a feeling so intense and so exquisite as to make the waking a kind of expulsion from Paradise. Where and what is that realm we have left? Is it less real that we saw it with another eye than this in its socket? Some have had these dreams in their waking hours; as Jacob Boehme, in that "Sabbath of the Soul" which he describes as lasting seven days, when he was "as it were inwardly surrounded by a Divine light," and when "the triumph that was in my soul I can neither tell nor describe"; or as Plotinus, who speaks of being caught up into an immediate contact with God; or Philo, who, when "coming

to his work empty suddenly became full, ideas being invisibly showered upon him and, as it were, implanted in him from on high"; or that sudden vision of the American doctor of whom Professor James speaks, who "saw that the universe is not composed of dead matter, but is, on the contrary, a living Presence, that all men are immortal, and that the cosmic order is such that all things work together for the good of each and all."

But there is more. Surely the crowning wonder is when men, and weak women, have found heaven in the midst of cruellest sufferings and approaching death! We with our comfort standard, with our income and four meals a day as the essentials of well being, find that story of the martyrs almost psychologically impossible. And yet it is true. We have their inner mind in their own words. Here is Perpetua, the young mother, at Carthage, who, when lodged in the horrible prison, writes: "The gaol became to me suddenly a palace, so that I liked better to be there than anywhere else." She writes up her diary to the night before her delivery to the wild beasts, closing it thus: "This is what I have done up to the day before the sports: how the sports themselves will go let someone else write if he pleases." Men have felt the goodness of God while actually burning. We read of Fructuosus in the Valerian prosecution calling out to his brethren from the flames: "The kindness of the Lord can never fail, either here or hereafter. This which you see is but the weakness of an hour." The greatest refutation of pessimism is surely the story of the world's sufferings.

The world's history is then, we see, full of sublime realisations, wrought out of all kinds of material, entering the soul through the most opposite roads. As we study them they suggest to us irresistibly certain questions. Are such times—the heart's triumphant hours—on the increase among us? Are they to be looked for and worked for, as life's normal and legitimate products? And is the mode of life to-day the best calculated to develop them? About one thing we may feel sure. The way of the true life lies always in the direction of these experiences. The world's real wealth is a wealth of the nobler feeling and of the conditions and opportunities for it. And man is meant for these things. He is made for his heaven. Any road that leads away, any method of living that dulls the appetite and clogs the capacity for these states of the soul, is to be avoided as a road, a method of death.

If that be so, what shall we say of our own time? To judge by much we see, the twentieth century might appear in this matter to be trying its hardest to contradict the verdict of history and of the nature of things. It is trying after a heaven for the body rather than for the soul. It spends so much time and labour over the preparation for living that it has none left for life itself. Millionaires are building palaces, and forgetting that these caravanserais can never exhale the perfume of a home. They are consumed with the passion for dollars, as if dollars could breed either great ideas or noble emotions. There are multitudes whose heaven is frankly sensual. Their paradise

is an orgie. The world ought by this time to know better. That way has been so often tried and always with one result. What a sensualist once said to the present writer is so universally true. "It all becomes very disgusting after a time." It is a profound student of human nature who observes on this point: "We find as man grows more civilised (he might have said spiritualised) sexual love assumes ever less value in his eyes if there go not with it, if there do not precede, accompany, and follow it the emotions built up of our thoughts and feelings, of our sweetest and tenderest hours and years."

No. The way to the human heaven is not by following the animal in us, but rather by the extrication of ourselves from it. It is a foundation to build from, not a house to live in. We are here to grow the soul in us, a soul worthy of the heaven above and around, which waits to reveal itself to us.

It is precisely as the soul thus grows, and finds in this world its ethereal food, that it becomes sure of the other heaven. It is with such natures, that with the passing years, the certitude increases that

> This life of mortal breath
> Is but a suburb of the life Elysian,
> Whose portal we call Death.

XIV

Fatigue

Fatigue, we are beginning to discover, is one of the first-class themes in modern life. It is an affair not simply of medicine and hygiene, but of morals, of philosophy, of religion—in fact, of the entire human welfare. A new psychology is arising, destined to profoundly alter our whole perspective, a psychology which deduces the conditions of right living from a rigorous and scientific observation of the facts and laws in our mental life. And this psychology is paying special attention to the phenomena of fatigue. It is studying its relation to the various features, not only of our physical, but also of our mental and moral life. We find there is an ethic of fatigue, almost a religion of it. In that reconstruction of the ethical and religious idea which is arising out of a clearer knowledge of the contents of consciousness, this subject will occupy a foremost place.

What is fatigue? It is curious how hazy the average notion is. We know it as a phase of feeling associated with certain physical states. When by walking, singing, hammering, or other exercises, the muscles and nerves employed have given off

a certain amount of energy, the fact is registered on our consciousness, and we say we are tired. But the feeling here is one thing, and the condition another. The whole of the body is working, perpetually giving off energy. But it is only a portion of the body that produces fatigue as a sensation. The blood circulates, the heart performs its rhythmic motion, the liver secretes, the cells in their myriads form and reform, and all this without sense of weariness. Fatigue, as felt, belongs purely to the voluntary nerves and muscles.

Fatigue is an affair of life, of sentient beings. There is no tiredness in the universe. Its sum of infinite energy continues from age to age its stupendous, complicated movement, without trace of exhaustion. We may speak of a wearing down here and there. Steel, by use, becomes tired and loses its edge. It will regain it by rest. The sun, which is now computed to be at a temperature of three million degrees Fahrenheit, or fourteen thousand times hotter than boiling water, may be exhausting its heat, but that is only to have it stored in another form elsewhere. The cosmos as a whole, amid eternal change, retains eternal freshness. How purely local and personal is the idea of fatigue may be realised when we remember that the body of the most weary mortal on the planet at this moment is, as to its every particle, one with a universe that is of everlasting strength. His body in one sense is no more tired than Mont Blanc or the Atlantic Ocean. The fatigue here is really a phase of consciousness, a danger signal giving notice of a physical condition requiring readjustment.

The inner life, which modern science now recognises as distinct from energy, requires a full complement of this energy, stored in the nerve and muscular centres, as the condition of its proper action, and the sense of fatigue is the warning bell rung in the brain when that store has been unduly diminished.

But this is not the end of the analysis. That oneness of mind and body which Spinoza placed at the foundation of his philosophy is being reaffirmed in new ways by modern science. We see how in a thousand directions mental life plays into the bodily and bodily life into the mental. Every physical condition repeats itself in the mind's sensation; every feeling and thought of the mind reacts immediately upon the body. Henle's researches show that joyful emotions quicken the respiration and make the circulation freer. The depressing emotions, like sorrow and fear, contract the arterial and bronchial muscles and so distinctly interfere with both circulation and breathing. A bright, inspiring thought is the finest of all physicians, whose medicine is working on every organ and every cell of our bodily system and arming it with a new power of life. But not less true and important is the obverse side, that the physical conditions exert their full influence upon the mental and the moral states. It is this side of the matter that the new psychology is specially investigating, with results that must tell to a momentous degree on our entire ethical and religious outlook.

It has shown, for instance, with an almost mathematical precision, that over-fatigue, exhaus-

tion of the nerve-centres, means for the time being a lowering of status of the entire inner man. In this condition his perceptions are less clear, his memory is defective, and, most of all, his volition faculty is weakened. It is precisely when the nerve forces are at low ebb that impulses of the animal nature, kept down and out of sight by the higher interests of the normal manhood, are apt to rush in upon the consciousness and endanger, sometimes to the wreckage point, the entire moral fabric. If the cases could be traced where men of former repute have made shipwreck of character, it would be found in a vast number of instances that they coincided with a period of overstrain, in which the physical reserve balance had been drained away. And where matters have not reached this extremity, yet what minor catastrophies have they to account for! A domestic explosion which breaks the peace of a household, and for weeks, may be, glooms and shadows two lives, as often as not means simply that a tired husband at the end of his day has met a tired wife, and that a single spark lighting on two overstrained nerve-systems has set both ablaze.

And that is not all, or, perhaps, even the worst. It is bad enough to note the evil to which fatigue may introduce us; to realise, as Hesiod ages ago put it, that then "vice may be found easily; that her way is smooth and her dwelling-place near." Quite as serious a consideration is the higher life interests against which a constant overstrain bars the door. The things which make a man's career great, the things to see, to think and to do, are possible only to his days of power. It

is when our nature is full to overflowing that the supreme visions come. It is then we get lifts of insight which show us a self beyond our self. It is then that men plan their daring deed, the seeming impossible enterprise which, achieved, becomes history. The orator magnetises his audience by his overflow; when his life fountain can water not his own soul only, but a thousand others. As we realise all this we may say with Voltaire, though in a new sense, "*Le superflu, chose si nécessaire.*"

With this exposition we may come now to some practical considerations. One is the scientific condemnation of asceticism as an aid to the nobler life. By that, of course, we do not mean the control and severest discipline of the animal nature. There science and the New Testament are at one. But the mediæval religion of fasts and flagellations and bodily emaciation generally in the supposed interests of sainthood, a religion which in many circles still survives, is by the new psychology proved a false one. Some of the noblest men the world has seen have been martyrs to its delusion. What a picture is that, drawn for us by his biographer, of Pope Gregory the Great, who, brought by his austerities to such a pass that throughout his pontificate he was never a day without pain, transacted his world-business, wrote his letters, composed his treatises, and gave his instructions in music lying on a couch because he was unable to stand or sit! The story is similar of Bernard, of St. Francis, of a host of noble souls of that time. How much greater had they been, and happier, could they have seen, as we now do, that the soul's

inspirations, the mind's thinking, the will's resolutions, are at their mightiest when the physical states are at their best ; that the culture of the body is an integral part of the religious life !

But the subject has more than an individual reference. There is discernible in history such a thing as a fatigue of races. A population overdriven by labour, or exhausted by its passions, will become old and decrepit before its time. To keep a nation young is the highest task of social economy, and that can only be achieved by knowledge of the whole complex law of living. And that is much more than a physical law. A people's entire soul may become fatally fatigued by the limitation of its interests. Vice limits the human interests to a few things—the lowest things. The soul, worked incessantly on this one level, becomes mortally weary, to the hating of its life. That was the secret of the Roman decadence. In Matthew Arnold's words :

> On that hard pagan world disgust
> And secret loathing fell ;
> Deep weariness, and sated lust,
> Made human life a hell.

What a spectacle is that of the later Rome which we get in the pages of Cassiodorus, when the enervated population, forgetful of their mighty ancestors, were to the vigorous Gothic race who ruled them, as the Greeks became later to their masters the Turks !

It is plain, then, that as individuals and as a people we need a philosophy and a religion of fatigue and of rest. When our activities go beyond

their limit; when we work not from our overflow, but from the dregs of our vitality; when we keep going, not by sleep and rest, but by the stimulant and the spur, we are sinning against the whole Decalogue of life. If we would see our highest, we must limit the output. We must never let work choke our top springs. For joy is not only our heritage; it is our duty. "*La joie de l'esprit,*" said Ninon, "*en marque la force.*" We want gladness enough, not only to flood our own life, but to flow over perpetually upon our neighbour. And there is no gladness in exhaustion. The highest philosophy of living is to work as the universe works, and to rest as it rests. We want to catch for ourselves the secret of that mighty cosmic rhythm; to catch the secret of its storing and of its giving forth of energy; of its repose and its multitudinous motion. The universe finds its rest in the interplay of a myriad of interests. That is how we shall find ours. The wider the keyboard the less strain on this note and that. The vaster the music we make the longer will the instrument last.

XV

Of Moral Stimulants

At certain seasons of the year London exhibits on a great scale the phenomenon of gregarious religion. Its public halls are in requisition day by day for crowded assemblies, met there to be played upon by orators. There is an orgy of speech, of song, of excited feeling. People come up to the gatherings from town and country to be "stimulated." Where the rhetoric is unusually fervid the stimulus becomes an intoxication, which is felt to be better still. After a sufficiently long course of these exercises, mind and body have a sensation resembling that of waking after a debauch. But people recover easily—their constitutions are well seasoned—and the world goes on as before.

These gatherings are, we say, an excellent illustration of the action of moral stimulants, a subject about which neither the Church nor society in general has as yet thought sufficiently. And there is no topic about which there is greater need of clear thinking, because, both by its uses and its abuses, the moral stimulant is at every moment acting on the community's most vital parts. We need to have first a proper idea of what a stimulant

is. In relation to the body we are using the term continually in a restricted and somewhat sinister application. In this department of things the "stimulant" is getting a bad name. We think naturally of alcohol, of drugs, of the spur, of something which makes a man feel stronger at the moment than he really is, and which results as surely in a corresponding diminution of vital power. If this were the sole range of action of the stimulant, and if the parallel held strictly in the sphere of morals and religion, we should indeed have here an indictment of some gravity against certain areas of religious activity.

But such a conception of the stimulant would be an entirely erroneous one. There is, of course, an unhealthy action, physical and moral, of which we shall have more to say; but what is first to be considered is the fact that in the overwhelming majority of instances the action of the stimulus is natural and wholesome. Our entire constitution, physical and moral, is constructed with a view to the stimulant. The whole muscular system, backed by the subtler one of the nerves, is worked in this way. We see. hear, think, feel, move by means of the stimulus. At every second our nerve system is in a state of new excitation, received from within or from without, and is sending its shock to the appropriate muscles. These in their turn contract with an energy proportionate to the spur received. At each moment those telegraph messengers, the afferent nerves, flash their messages to the consciousness behind, messages which in their joy or pain are at times the most tremendous of stimulants;

at each moment that mysterious force, the will, sets its current moving outward, thrills the efferent nerves with its power and purpose, and bids them with their flash of energy stir the obedient muscles into play. We have only to think of this machinery to realise how infinitesimal really—for all its seeming formidable proportions—is the abuse of the stimulant in the physical organism, as compared with its wholesome and necessary use.

Carrying all this in our minds, we can now, with less likelihood of going astray, discuss the action of the stimulant in the moral and religious sphere. Nothing is more interesting or instructive than to watch, over the vast area of human living which history opens to us, the methods employed in this business and their results. It has always been realised that if man needed a spur anywhere it was in the region of character, of the higher part of him. His animal appetites needed no help from the philosopher or moralist. They were always ready, too ready, for their part. They needed the curb more than the spur. They are the oldest in him and the most securely planted. On the other hand, the moral and spiritual are the latest features of his development. They are new born in him. The whole future is theirs, but at present they are infantile and feeble. And so at every point their force has needed to be nursed and stimulated. To guard this precious dower the religions have arisen; in its interest philosophers have erected their systems. To enhance its authority theology has called in the tremendous conception of rewards and punishments in a world to come.

It is true that both in ancient and modern times the idea has possessed men of a time coming when character and virtue would require no stimulants of this kind; when men would do right for right's sake alone. Thus Diderot, in his essay "Sur les Femmes," speaks of a woman who promenaded in the streets of Alexandria, her feet bare, her hair disordered, a torch in one hand, a ewer in the other, and who cried, "I would burn heaven with this torch, and extinguish hell with this water, in order that man might love God for Himself alone." And Cicero, in the De Officiis, nobly pleads for a virtue sufficient to itself without aid from gods or men. "We ought," says he, "to be convinced that though we could conceal any transaction from all gods and men, yet that nothing avaricious should be done, nothing unjust, nothing licentious, nothing incontinent." We remember how Lessing, too, in his "Education of the Human Race," predicts the time when men will have no need to borrow motives from the future—"but will do what is right because it is right."

As, upon a question of this kind, we study the non-Christian nations, while we find much that is repugnant, it is not this which most strikes us. Far more impressive is the spectacle they present of an inspired movement of the human spirit. He were blind indeed who failed to see in this the working of the Power that makes for righteousness. We have here an education of the race in which at every point one recognises a Divine Preceptor everywhere. We find a straining for the highest, and every known stimulus applied to the dormant

faculties of the soul. Under a Plato, a Seneca, an Epictetus, philosophy becomes a theology. Epictetus might be a Methodist preacher. He is ardent for conversions. Following his system, he says, "from a shameless man you will become a modest man, from a disorderly an orderly man, from a faithless a faithful man, from a man of unbridled habits a sober man." Plato calls in the aid of external stimulants. He realises, as the modern Church realises, the power of music, properly applied, as a soul's excitant. He would agree with Luther that "music is the finest thing in the world after theology." The Greek philosopher, indeed, saw deeper into this than the moderns. In the "Republic" he argues that rhythm and harmony enter into the deepest parts of the soul, and that by the educated sense of harmony we may discern between the good and the base, the ugly and the beautiful, in all things.

And nowhere than among those ancient peoples has there been more vividly realised, as a stimulus of the soul, the power of great dominant ideas. The Roman's patriotism may have had a lower significance than our own, but have we any such sense of what we owe to our country as that which made a Regulus go back to Carthage, to deliver himself there to torture and death, because he deemed that course necessary to the honour and welfare of Rome? Who can read his Plutarch without realising the majesty of the ideas which stir his heroes, and the strength of the characters these ideas helped to form! Plutarch to-day even is a great school of morals. His draught is an

invigorating one. We do not wonder when we read that at the French Revolution it was on him a Carnot, a Vergniaud, a Madame Roland formed themselves.

And yet the ancient philosophy, considered as a universal moral stimulant, was a failure. Aristotle himself confesses as much. Speaking of treatises on morals, he declares that while they seem to have power to move generous and liberal minds, they have none to persuade the multitude to what is virtuous and honourable. Nor was there much moral stimulus in the classic religions. Their ceremonies were æsthetic and spectacular rather than moral. In fact, as to morals, their influence, on the whole, was the other way. How get moral inspiration from the worship of gods that were themselves grossly immoral ?

It is when we take all this into review that we are able the better to estimate the new stimulus introduced into the world by Christianity. As against all that had gone before, or was outside, we have here a religion that was, for one thing, through and through ethical ; that for another possessed, apart from its precepts, a unique source of stimulus ; and that, for a third thing, set its inspired ethic working not amongst the philosophers, amongst the *élite*, but amongst the obscurest and most neglected portions of humanity. To the virtues of the Greek and Roman schools it brought, as Schopenhauer himself acknowledged, a new passion, the passion of love, of tenderness, the passion for helping and saving men. Personality, as the world is now beginning to recognise, is the foundation of every-

thing, and the new Gospel won its fight in the old world, as it does in the new, for the reason that its doctrine of love centred in a Personality with an absolutely unique example of love in Himself and in the power to create it in others. We have spoken before of the moral stimulant of great ruling ideas. There has been no idea so potent in stimulus of character as the faith and trust that have anchored themselves on Christ. What a testimony to this is Renan, where, as an avowed outsider, speaking of the Port Royalists, he says, "Sister Marie-Claire exclaiming 'Victory! Victory!' with her last breath, may have been sustained by a faith no longer our own, but she proved that man by his will creates a force the law of which is not the law of the flesh. She set forth the nature of the spirit by an argument superior to all those of Descartes; and in showing us the soul quitting the body as a ripe fruit drops from its stalk, she taught us not to pronounce too lightly on the limits of its destiny."

With this unequalled stimulant in its keeping the problem of the modern Church is how to apply it. We are here immediately on the question of uses and abuses. As a matter of fact, and dealing with the broad masses of the people, there is at present no great danger of producing too much moral intoxication. The spiritual sense of the British public is not at all overcharged. It can stand a large amount of prodding. The man who can gather together the multitude from its ordinary occupations and dissipations and pour on them the stores of purifying emotion that are hid in the Gospel; who can in this way create a contagion of

love, an enthusiasm for righteousness, is doing the best possible service to Society and the State. The point here is that the exaltation must be a normal and not an abnormal one. The process should, in fact, be like that of kindling a fire. We set light to the paper and the wood in order that, when their crackle is over, there may be the steadfast heat of the coal.

There should, in these matters, be no emotion which stops with emotion. Few addresses, we suppose, have been more immediately powerful than those of Napoleon to his troops. But they were always an incitement to action. Their effect did not rest in feeling. It showed in the battle that followed. We have no business to stir men, unless it is to fight or to work. The mischief of much of our religionising to-day is that its heady draught is for intoxication rather than for business. A revival that simply burns up the emotional fuel of a neighbourhood; that is an affair of singings and shoutings rather than of ethical renewal; that puts lyric exaltation and fevered imaginings in the place of a changed character—is a species of mental dram drinking, which people were better without. As Mrs. Poyser, in an immortal pronouncement, has made plain to us, the stimulus should be that of food rather than of medicine.

A final word. No one can study such a theme as this, on any broad scale, without realising the high destiny of the human spirit. The movement it discloses has been so uniform, so universal, towards so evident an end. The spiritual faculty in man is here to-day. It is only beginning to show its

infinite capacity. All things conspire for its development. The story of the world is the history of its incessant stimulation. And the process will go on for ever, because as surely as our planet is stirred through spring and summer through the light and warmth the sun pours on it, so surely are we wrought on for ever by a Sun behind the sun, whose light and heat are the forces by which our soul grows, and by which the Eternal Kingdom eternally comes.

XVI

A Question of Age

The world has of late been discussing the question of age as related to efficiency. But there is here another question than that of efficiency. What is the relation of age to character, to morality, to the general outlook upon life? Are old men morally higher than young men, or the reverse? Is public or private honour safer in the keeping of sixty than of thirty? Does religion count for more at one end of life than at the other? Is there such a thing as ethical continuity, or are all kinds of characters developed successively in the progress through the years of a single individual? Not one question, it appears, but dozens of questions start to view on this theme and ask for the answers which study and experience can give.

At first sight the answers are singularly confusing. The witnesses appear to contradict each other, and by their halting replies to bar the way to a verdict. What stands out most clearly in the investigation is the range of man's variability. It is, perhaps, the most wonderful thing about him. We can predict the character of an oak through its oakhood. The same may be said of a rattlesnake

or a crocodile. But no one prophesies in that way about a man. Where he is to-day, in thinking and feeling, in politics, in religion, in character, offers no certain clue as to where to find him two decades further on. The strange thing here is that one half the world disproves the rule about the other half. For there are multitudes of men whose later career is an exact and orderly development from the earlier. But the induction we should make from studying these people would be utterly upset by the experience of their next door neighbour. There are people whose endings flatly contradict their beginnings. English politics of to-day and yesterday offer us examples of *ætat* sixty disavowing and contemning every principle believed in and fought for by *ætat* thirty. What would Newman have thought, in his evangelical boyhood, had it been whispered him that he would die a Roman Cardinal? Imagine the gulf between the Lamennais who wrote the "Essai sur l'Indifférence," and the intransigeant Lamennais of the "Paroles!" Society presents us with the spectacle of ex-monks who are preachers of atheism, of ex-profligates and *roués* who are active in religious revivals. Our species is a fascinating study, but clearly not an easy one.

When we study the relation of the years to these changes the first result is, we have said, confusing. There is a certain class of facts which seem to establish a case against age on the score of feeling and character. Huxley, in one of his letters, makes laughing allusion to senile morality as if he suspected it. It has been remarked of George Eliot

that in her novels the characters deteriorate as they grow older. They drop their idealism. Dinah Morris, from inspired preacher, settles down to a comfortable housewife. Lydgate, the young doctor in "Middlemarch," who begins with the highest scientific aspirations, is content at the end with a fortune made out of a gouty *clientèle*. And history, on one side at least, seems to support this view. It offers numbers of reputations ruined by the years. Nero as a young man seemed well-disposed when under Seneca. Had Harry the Eighth died at thirty he would have been reckoned one of the most popular of English Sovereigns. In the career of Alexander the Great nothing is more noticeable than the moral worsening which the years brought. In place of the early generosity and self-forgetfulness came caprice, cruelty, the murder of old friends such as Clitus, Philotas and Parmenio. This side of the matter—the case, that is, for deterioration—has evidently impressed the modern mind. So much so, indeed, that a recent medical writer has advanced the view that the moral sentiments suffer a natural decay in the course of years, and that age becomes ethically inferior to youth by a process as natural as the whitening of its hair or the lowering of its vital force.

This last assertion is, of course, in sympathy with that materialistic determinism which has gained such wide currency, and which makes character an affair purely of molecular movements in the organism. But this solution is far too simple for the facts. For in those so far adduced we have only one side. What is equally certain is that if

some men have worsened with age, others have grown better. The world is full of instances where the highest levels of idealism, of spiritual character, of heroic doing and suffering have been exhibited at life's farther end. Polycarp, through all his long life, was never nobler than when, asked by his judges to renounce his Master, he replied, "Eighty and six years have I been His servant. . . . How can I now blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" Epictetus is at his best when, as an old man, he finds his one occupation is "to praise God." It is not the young but the old Augustine that we revere. There was no moral falling off in aged Wycliffe, nor in Sir Thomas More, as he with a laughing serenity laid his head on the block for his faith. No, nor in Baxter, who according to Calamy "talked about another world like one that had been there;" nor in Zinzendorf, nor Swedenborg, nor in John Wesley. These facts are as plain as the others, and have to be fitted somewhere into our result. Whatever else they do they disprove the mere mechanical theory. Man is not to be reckoned up simply in terms of his brain tissue or blood corpuscles.

From what sources, then, are we finally to derive our judgment? What does the age factor amount to in the question of character? Here, to begin with, we have to concede something, though, as we have just said, by no means everything, to the nature processes. Our own consciousness, our own volition are, we soon discover, not the only makers of ourselves. The child mind becomes the youth mind, and the youth mind the man

mind, without any leave asked of us. As life proceeds we are astonished to find how we have grown into things and out of them. Our loves, our fascinations, our obsessions, take leave of us, and we cannot explain why. It is as if our nature has fed on one kind of food to repletion, and then had suddenly lost appetite. The long persistence in one kind of life brings, in some natures, a reaction, in which desire calls out for all that other side which it has missed. Under this influence the debauchee becomes at times an ascetic. In other instances it is the contrary that happens. The ascetic discovers stirring in him the inclination

> To seize on life's dull joys from a strange fear
> Lest losing them, all's lost and nought remains.

There was a certain truth to nature in Renan's painful drama, "The Abbesse de Jouarre," where he depicts the devotee, as after a life-long career of devotion, falling suddenly into sensuality. It is indeed the greatest mistake to imagine that the animal inclinations lose their hold with the advance of years. Thackeray's Lord Steyne was no fledgling, and he was true to type. The debaucheries of a Tiberius were greatest at the end. The tendency here has shown itself not only in mere profligates, but in men otherwise of highest character and performance. How otherwise are we to explain the fact that John Knox, and Farel, the Swiss reformer, the one at sixty and the other at sixty-nine, each married a young girl—to the astonishment and grief of their friends!

And these mysterious processes—actions and

reactions of the inner nature—are, in their effect upon character, supplemented by circumstances which are special to age. Both by what they gain and by what they lose, men in later life find themselves far more dangerously placed than in earlier years. They are, for one thing, freer from restraint. They are no longer subordinates, but lords of themselves. Their old guides and teachers have disappeared. In many instances, and notoriously to-day, beliefs which once exercised a restraining influence have lost their power. Idols have been shattered. Ideals which shone once as with light from heaven are gone. The "vision splendid" has faded "into the light of common day." They have been behind the scenes to discover that effects which imposed on their youth as something angelic and celestial are an affair of stage carpentry and the big brush. Age is thus with multitudes the time of disillusionment, in itself the most perilous of mental states.

It is at this later period, too, that men, if ever, become rich. And the rich man has always found it hard to enter the Kingdom. No age is fonder of its money than ours, or more prolific of arguments for its possession. It nevertheless remains that between property and the highest idealism no nexus has yet been found. It is moneyless youth that dreams the great dreams, that attempts the heroic. We never hear of an elderly millionaire going as a missionary. It is money, too, that buys all the animal pleasures, all the magnificences, all that holds men by their senses and that dulls the eye of the soul. What is more, the possession of wealth not only buys gratifications of this kind,

but it can purchase condonation of the most illicit of them. A man, if he is rich enough, can buy up the whole Ten Commandments. There is a growing number of this class who act on the principle expressed by the famous Duchesse du Maine : "Ce que chez les mortels est une effronterie, entre nous autres demi-dieux n'est qu'honnête galanterie." And apart from this use of its possessions there comes with man in mature years that mere love of hoarding than which nothing more abases the soul. The moralists of all ages have protested against it, but, as it seems, in vain. How convincing is the satire here of Cicero : "What avarice in an old man can propose to itself I cannot conceive ; for can anything be more absurd than, in proportion as less of our journey remains, to seek a greater supply of provisions ?" Were the Roman orator here to-day he would find more reason than ever for his rebuke.

Avarice, power, unrestrained freedom, disillusionment, the increase of material satisfactions, these are some of the handicaps which maturity puts upon the pursuit of the spiritual life. No wonder that, in the soul's pilgrimage, this patch of ground should at times have fallen into such bad repute. We see the reason for it. Men fall so often here because they neglect to regard this period as, not less than the earlier ones, a time of probation. The mistake is to suppose that in its later stage the battle of life is over, whereas, as a matter of fact, it has reached its hottest phase. We give all manner of instructions, guidances, safeguardings for youth and young manhood, as though these were the only

breakneck parts of the climb. A man may go through them all to find himself bogged at the last. The Slough of Despond is for many at the end rather than the beginning.

But is there any necessity that men should fall here? The examples we have cited, units from an innumerable host, are testimonies to the contrary. There is, indeed, nothing either in the circumstances or the inner evolution of age that furnishes a real excuse for failure. At best the excuses are cowards' reasons for running away. Are men disillusioned? What with? Persons, circumstances, beliefs? What then? Am I to turn false because someone else or something else has proved so? If we have discovered some frauds and hollownesses in the world, has not our journey discovered to us also some grand and solid realities? If external authorities have lost their hold, has not their place been taken by a nobler inward compulsion? Have we not discovered that "the soul is free, not when it is at the mercy of every random impulse, but when it is acted upon by congenial forces, when it is exposed to spiritual pressure, to constraint within itself!" The achievement of a serene old age; of preserving, amid its manifold and peculiar temptations, a mind unstained, unspotted, is indeed faith's mightiest work. It is its final, crowning victory over this present world.

XVII

"Under Direction"

"One only thing has been a terrible pang to me, the giving over of my own judgment in questions of moral judgment to any human authority. It is so absolutely new and incomprehensible an idea to me, that any other test should supplant, without risk to itself and me, the inner test of my actions that my conscience affords." Thus wrote Alice Le Strange, one of the most gifted and delightful of women, the future wife of the brilliant mystic, Laurence Oliphant, to Thomas Lake Harris, the mysterious American preacher and hypnotist to whom the Englishman had already sold his soul. The lady, the descendant of one of the oldest families in England, had already been persuaded by her betrothed to accept the American as absolute director of her mind and conscience, though she declares in this same letter that "she felt she was throwing her own conscience overboard and putting out the one clear light God had given her." What came of this "direction," both for herself and her future husband, the world has read in Mrs. Oliphant's biography. The quotation, and the incident altogether, may serve as introduction to the discussion

of a question full of vital issues, and about which the present generation is in grievous want of some clear leading.

The action of the Oliphants in placing themselves, body and conscience, under the absolute will of another, would probably strike most of us in the way it struck the lady herself when it was first proposed to her. It would be throwing the conscience overboard, the putting out of our guiding light, an act in defiance both of our religion and our common sense. Yet, let us remember, their act was only the carrying to a certain length of a tendency, a principle, we may say, that is embedded deep in human nature. We are all of us, more or less, "under direction." "Direction," in one form or another, is taken for granted in the very constitution of society. Some of our greatest organisations are founded entirely on this idea. The relation of children to their elders is one of "direction." The whole theory and practice of education suppose the constant subordination of the pupil to his teacher. We pour our facts, our doctrines, our views into these young minds and expect them to be received without contradiction. To refuse acceptance is a disobedience, demanding reproof or punishment.

The grown-up man is, over a large surface of his life, in the same condition as the child. The soldier, the sailor, has given over his mind to that of his superior. The world will have autocracy as long as a ship sails the seas. We cannot navigate by popular suffrage. The safety of the vessel and the making of the voyage depend on the understanding that the hundreds beneath him execute the will

of the man at the top. On a larger scale we have the State, by its laws and statutes limiting and directing the conduct of the citizens. On a wider scale still we see superior races governing the destinies, developing the whole mind and interior life of the inferior and feebler peoples.

The principle, we see then, is everywhere at work. The point of dispute is as to how far the principle shall be carried. The dispute has been one of the fiercest in history. It is on this question that religion has fought some of its greatest battles, and has undergone its sharpest divisions. In the Roman Church the "confessor" and the "director" are all powerful. The devout Catholic on the most vital questions of his interior life takes the mind and will of the priest as a substitute for his own. In the religious orders the submission is still more absolute. The first duty which Ignatius Loyola enjoined on his followers was that of obedience. He tells them what he means by obedience. As a corpse has no motion of its own, but is moved solely from the outside; as the violin is passive in the hands of the musician, so must it be with the Jesuit and his superior.

The Roman Church has, however, by no means a monopoly of religious "direction." Anglicanism, as we know, in its later Ritualistic phases, has developed a kind of Confessionalism in which we have the dangers of the Roman system without the Roman safeguards. But let us be candid here. There is a Protestant "direction" as well as a sacerdotal. The principle under a different form is in as vigorous operation on the one side as on

the other. The Reformation, as we trace its history throughout Europe, was the affair of about half a dozen dominant wills. The leaders had no qualms about impressing themselves with their authority's utmost weight on the minds of their followers. Calvin's Geneva Constitution, Knox's "Book of Discipline" were drawn up with the intention of ruling men's actions and consciences. The peace of Augsburg made a man's religion an affair of the state he belonged to. In modern times the Free Churches, though organised on a democratic basis, have given full play to the principle of "direction." A Wesley, a Spurgeon did the theological thinking for their followers. The popular preacher of to-day expects that his congregation will take its doctrinal colour from his expositions.

One could enlarge on this statement of existing conditions, but it is time we went in search of the principle which should guide us in our judgment of them. Direction clearly, of a certain kind, and up to a certain point, is a good thing. If it were not there would be no such general acceptance of it. It is easy, indeed, to see where the good of it lies. Human education all through is an affair of the greater minds leading and inspiring the smaller ones. Redemption has ever been through the higher soul possessing the lower souls, pouring its energy into them, lifting them towards its own standard. The principle has been at work in every age. In the Symposium of Plato, Alcibiades, speaking of the influence of Socrates upon him, opens to us the secret. After a jest at the ugly head of Socrates, which he likens to the mask of a

Silenus, he continues: "But when I opened him and looked within at his serious purpose, I saw in him divine and golden images of such fascinating beauty that I was ready to do in a moment whatever Socrates commanded." Here we see the legitimate ascendancy, the true "direction." The soul bows to the greater spirit because it recognises the inner beauty there exhibited. It realises at once that the road it points out is the true way to the heights.

But how far shall "direction" go? That, we have observed, is the crucial point. Can we, amid the prevailing confusion, find our way to any sure dividing line? We spoke at the beginning of the training of the children. Let us come back to that. At the opening of its career a child is carried in arms. Its entire movement is in the hands of nurse or mother. Later it is taught to walk, the little feet upheld by the guiding hand. But the "direction" is progressively relaxed, until at last our youngster runs alone. The training here we see has been one of restriction and guidance, but always with a view to an ultimate independence. The end aimed at is that the child may walk alone.

This is the training of the body, and it is impossible not to see its analogy to the training of the soul. Education, politics, religion are all phases of human development, and the enlarged vision sees them all as working towards one end, the perfection of the individual. Where authority is exercised over others the object, in any proper conception, is that these others may in their turn gain authority —over themselves. Their present guidance is to help them by-and-by to walk alone. When govern-

ment, when religion pursue any other aim than this, they have become not the friends, but the enemies of man. The worst disservice we can render to another is to try and create him after our image. Who are you who seek to turn this brother man from his own proper destiny? Who are you who seek to stifle this soul's voice and to make it a mere echo of your own? We have heard people speak sometimes, in their dealing with the young, of "breaking their will." But what of their own will? Shall someone break that?

Where "direction" has gone so fatally wrong, in governments and so many forms of religion, is in the failure to recognise that their proper end is not to suppress individuality, to suppress the will, but to develop it to its utmost and highest. The priest, the teacher has made hideous wreck and failure of his work when it leads the disciple to lean ever more heavily upon him instead of to walk in his own freedom. To "break the will" forsooth! One might as well talk of mending a watch by breaking its mainspring. The human will is of all things in this earth the most wonderful, the most sacred. To add to its resources, to secure its freedom of action, to open up to it the way of inner reinforcement, should be the one supreme object of spiritual education. For it is here, in this secret place, man touches his godhood. It is here, in the soul's innermost, holiest ground, when with this single invisible force he meets the onset of passion, the craven voice of his fears, the solicitations of the world, the threats of foes, with his

invincible "I will," that man shows his kinship with the God who made him.

But the way to this freedom is a slow one, and there are no safe short cuts. That is religion's excuse, and a good one, for keeping its children in tutelage so long. Goethe, enamoured as he was of inner liberty, saw this clearly. "Everything," says he, "that frees our spirit without giving us the mastery over ourselves is pernicious." Indeed, we come only to our freedom by yielding ourselves to another compulsion. As a modern writer puts it: "The soul is free, not when it is at the mercy of every random impulse, but when it is acted upon by congenial forces, when it is exposed to spiritual pressure, to constraint within itself." The will feels itself most divinely free when it mysteriously realises its unity with the universal Will out of which itself has come. In Quaker Barclay's phrase it is at its true level when it finds itself "led inwardly and immediately by the Spirit of God."

It is by this reinforcement and spiritual direction of the individual will that man will eventually fight down all his foes and come into his kingdom. To weaken it, whether by passion or by despotism, is to slay the soul. Poor Oscar Wilde in his "De Profundis," that confession of a broken heart, writ in blood and tears, tells us how the flesh can slay. "Desire at the end was a malady or a madness or both. . . . I ceased to be lord over myself. I was no longer the captain of my soul and did not know it. I allowed pleasure to dominate me. I ended in horrible disgrace." On the other hand, when priests and religious teachers assail the will with

spiritual threat or brow-beating they are enemies only less to be dreaded than the passions. It was the emasculation a misplaced zeal has produced that led Gibbon to declare that "it was the virtues rather than the vices of the clergy that were dangerous to society," a remark that Hume has endorsed. Not coercion, but inspiration; not the forging of fetters for the soul, but the surrounding it with heaven's own freest air is the function of the teacher, the true mission of the Church.

The freedom thus won can never be misused, or turned to licence. For the souls that reach it find themselves everywhere overarched by the same spiritual laws and controlled by the same beneficent forces. Nature is in no hurry in granting this freedom. She knows the danger of hurry. Until tutelage has become a hindrance rather than a help she will keep men in tutelage. But the government, the Church, the teacher that are wise in their generation will work always by her secret instructions. They will govern, guide and teach in order that man may at the end govern, guide and teach himself.

XVIII

The Ethics of Victory

"STRIFE is the Father of all things, the King of all; it makes of some Gods, of others men: of some it makes slaves, of others free men." Thus Heraclitus of Ephesus. In periods of great national excitement—in America a Presidential election, in England or France a national vote at the polls—we have what appears almost a confirmation of the old sage's contention. We witness a tremendous conflict; in our ears rings the shout of the victors, the moan of the vanquished; we watch an astonishing displacement of power; the ascent of unknown men to prominence, the descent of known ones to obscurity. Every citizen feels himself either conqueror or conquered. His private and individual affairs are swallowed up in the common consciousness. That his side, his party is up or down makes his happiness or his chagrin. In this immense tumult of feeling one feature of the situation, even in the sanest minds, is apt to be obscured. The intoxication of victory may make us forget that there is an ethic of victory, and that this is really in the long run the only thing worth considering. It may be worth while to examine this aspect of the matter.

Man has been diligently fighting his neighbour from the beginning; but it was comparatively late in history that our question about the business dawned upon him as even a subject for discussion. In the dim unwritten past he fought as those

> Dragons of the prime
> That tare each other in their slime.

The morality here, if such we may call it, was worse even than that of the beasts of prey. The brutes conquered to satisfy their hunger, but with man an essential part of the joy of victory was the discomfiture and agony of his vanquished foe. In imperial Rome, at the height of its civilisation, a conqueror's "triumph" offered as its chief and most enjoyed feature the spectacle of distinguished captives dragged, manacled, behind his car. What "ethic of victory" was in the mind of an Attila, of a Genghis Khan; of the Ottoman Bajazet, who at the battle of Nicopolis, where the flower of the Western chivalry were slain, had the thousands of prisoners beheaded before him, the frightful work going on through all the long hours of a summer day; or of Timour the Tartar, Bajazet's conqueror, who as he swept through Asia made of city after city a smoking ruin, where neither man nor beast survived, and where all that was left was a pyramid of skulls?

And that kind of victory is not yet obsolete in the world. There are races, counting millions of men, ready, if the chance offers, to repeat it to-day. What we call civilised warfare reproduces three-parts of it. And in our own civic and political

contests, waged with tongue and pen, on the platform and at the polling booths, have we not all felt the ancient savagery stir in our blood, and leap ever and anon to expression in thought and speech? The barbaric inheritance in us is so old, so firmly established; and the new in us, the high and spiritual, is so new and inexperienced, that the battle is continually flinging us back again on that prehistoric instinct which links us with the Druid and the stone age man that went before us. We find in us for the moment his lack of imagination; his failure to appreciate the standpoint of the other man; even something of his base delight over the humiliation our opponent is suffering. There is evidently—and we realise it when we have regained our heads—no moral discipline more needed, no moral danger more imminent and formidable than that of the moment of victory.

The first danger here is that of mistaking an outside triumph for an inward and real one. A very considerable proportion of what are hailed as victories are, to the seeing eye, bad defeats. That is true both of persons and causes. In the struggle with our rival he may have gone down. But who has conquered? If we have been unjust to him, and fought him with unhallowed weapons, we may be called the victors, but our place is lower than his. The best men found that out long ago. Plato never ceases to reiterate how infinitely better it is to suffer injustice than to do it. "The unjust doer of unjust actions," says he in the "Gorgias," "is miserable in any case—more miserable, however, if he be not punished." If through and after our

battle, pride, vainglory and the instinct of revenge have swept over us and had their way in us, whatever shouts and jubilations are rising outside, we are the defeated party.

A similar thing has to be said of causes. The worst day for a spiritual movement often enough has been that of its outward success. Constantine's imperialising of Christianity was the defeat of its inner idea. The elevation of its teachers to temporal power was their degradation as prophets of the Unseen. When the Church had won to the top, and was lording it over princes and emperors, it forgot the thing it had come for. And do not let us imagine that the dangers of victory are confined to any one department of the spiritual movement. They show everywhere. The German Anabaptists of the Reformation time were many of them excellent men, examples of learning, piety and blameless life. But when, as at Münster and elsewhere, in the troubles of the time, the party gained a momentary political mastery, we have the story of monstrous excesses, of ruthless slaughterings of unoffending people, of wildest debauchery. It is the saddest of histories, indeed, this of a temporal victory acting on undisciplined natures to blight their early promise, and wreck the moral beginnings within them. We remember Plato's description of the tyrant. He begins always, says he, as a protector.

It is significant also to note how different are the results of the most resounding victories from the expectations of the combatants. A public triumph sets forces in motion—new, incalculable—which

neither side had wotted of. Most victors in these scenes suffer soon after from cruel disillusionments. Human nature, one may think, has to pay a price to the infernal powers for all its achievements. The European Reformation was a great deliverance, but over its whole area, over England, Scotland, Germany, Switzerland, the after conduct of princes and nobles on the one side, and of the peasantry on the other, filled its leaders, filled Knox and Luther, Calvin and Melancthon, with despair. The French Revolution at its beginning excited the noblest spirits to rapture. The planting of the tree of liberty on the Champ de Mars seemed the dawn of a millennium. Wordsworth sang of it :—

> Bliss were it in that dawn to be alive,
> And to be young were very heaven.

What followed drove the poets into pessimism, and the world-rulers to the extremities of reaction. The English democracy went mad with delight over the Reform Bill of 1832. Two years after—only two short years—Earl Grey had resigned, beaten over Irish coercion ! In all these instances, and many more could be cited, a great and lasting thing had been done, a long stride forward had been taken. But all the problems had not been solved, nor had Paradise been regained. Men found themselves instead in the region of new disciplines and new fatigues.

From this long experience of the past it is time we had all of us reached a juster estimate of what victory means and entails. It is time, especially, that we realised the stern ethic it imposes on us.

That ethic leaves amplest room for joy. It is, after all, a great thing to win, and Nature meant us to believe it is great. Else why our apparatus of enthusiasm? But we need to be sure of *what* we are winning. There is to be no mean *Schadenfreude*, no ignoble delight that our opponent is humiliated. Our victory is unworthy unless we believe it to be as good for him as for ourselves. If it be not a gain to humanity at large, in which *he* is included, it is no end that we should fight for. If the triumph be over a gross injustice, from which we have suffered, and in the perpetration of which our opponent has taken part, the victory for him and us will be simply in the reinstatement of justice. Here "not to do likewise is the best revenge." Our quarrel is with narrowing ideas, with hateful survivals, with worn-out institutions; never with the persons who represent them. We fight that they, with us, may come into a larger inheritance.

It is as we become possessed with this higher ethic that our fighting enthusiasms are more and more turned from the old arena to a new one. To-day man's greatest fight is with one whom he loves while he wrestles with her: his conquests are not over his fellow, but over Nature. Here the joy of victory is without alloy; its rapture means no opponent's humiliation; the enemy is a friend, a mother who laughs as her child wrests from her the latest secret. In view of all this one may say the true human advance lies aside from politics. The kings of music, of art, of science, of literature; the great souls that give us a Hamlet, a Moonlight

Sonata, a Madonna Ansidei; that discover the secret of steam, of electricity; that track the germ of a disease and find its remedy; that open new spiritual horizons—to these it is given to win victories which help all and hurt none. More and more the fighting element in man will find in this noblest arena the scene of its energies and rewards.

Nevertheless, there is a victory over persons, a worthy and a notable one, the joy of which we may all legitimately seek. It is not one of coercion, of subjugation in any form. The world has tried that long enough, with an invariable result of disaster. Far back in history Asoka, the Buddhist king, one of earth's wisest, struck the true note in that wonderful saying, "They must not think that conquests by means of arrows deserve the name of conquest; they are but disturbances and violence. The conquests of religion alone are real conquests. They hold good for this world and the next." And even here we have to discriminate. There are moral conquests that are conquests by violence. They represent the breaking down of a man's own individuality by an unlawful pressure. We are only on the right track when we have recognised that the fight here is not to subdue a man's will, but to help him to assert it. The battle for us all finally is in that viewless realm the republic of the soul. And here we can fight for others as well as for ourselves. We may well bear a hand for our neighbour in the mortal struggle of his nobler part, his spiritual faculty, to assert itself over the lower powers that war against it. The battle for you and me is not that we may master our fellow, and so rule over

him, but to help him to that self-mastery which, when everywhere achieved, will give us a community of nobly independent personalities, each giving of his best to his brethren, and all guided by the same Divine, universal law.

To sum up. The experience yielded by our long world-history should enable us to discern the true and false, the noble and the base, in victory. No instructed spirit will find its joy in the humiliation of others. Its triumphs will be in results, whose benefits are for all, opponents included. Such a soul works for causes, and not for aims that end in self. In the personal sphere there will be no moral coercion, but only a help to self-mastery. Finally, external victories will be judged by their spiritual contents. A resounding outside triumph may in this view be the most serious of defeats, and the outside disaster the noblest victory. The greatest of all human achievements was the ascent to a Cross.

XIX

The Soul's Distillations

THE title expresses only a part of what we propose here to deal with. It is an affair not simply of distillations, but of extractions, of subtilisations, the whole of the processes in short by which raw material is refined, transmuted, raised to a higher power. We want to inquire whether anything similar to this is to be found in the inner life of the soul. We are all more or less familiar with the outside operations. At Cognac there are great establishments where we may watch the turning of wine into brandy. It is a distillation. Elsewhere men obtain spirit from beet-root, from potatoes and other sugar compounds. In other directions we have subtle essences, where the force spread originally over a vast quantity of the originating material has been concentrated into a few drops. The greatest triumph of modern extraction is the miracle of radium, where, out of tons of quartz, crushed, pounded, passed through one process after another, we see emerging at the end a substance which stands as the very quintessence of energy; a substance into one ounce of which is compressed a power computed to be capable

of raising 10,000 tons a mile high. It would seem as though the material progress of the world, the whole triumph of man in this sphere, will become more and more an affair of this concentration of energy ; of the elaboration of methods by which the power of winds and waves, of the solid earth and its elements, will be distilled into new and ever subtler forms, obedient to his lightest touch.

With this before us we may now come to our special inquiry. Does the inward life in any degree correspond in this aspect to the outer ? Have we there also what, with any accuracy, may be called distillations or extractions ? Do we discern in the soul such a thing as the conversion of raw material, the raising it to a new quality and power ? The inquiry is not a merely speculative one. It opens up questions of the utmost importance in psychology, in religion, and the general conduct of life.

We cannot look long into the nature of the life within us without coming to the conclusion that the analogy is a very close one. As we think the matter over we begin to suspect, indeed, that the soul is the greatest of all distilleries. Its one business is a transmutation, an obtaining and using of essences. The soul begins by distilling for itself a body. According to an eminent French psychologist, M. Delanne, the theory that best fits modern research is that "a human being is a psychic form which assimilates matter. When its energy is exhausted it assimilates matter no longer, the physical body is disintegrated, and the soul in another form pursues its career." "A mere hypothesis," says someone, "and a disput-

able one." It may be disputed, we admit. But whatever view we may take as to the precise form in which the relation of soul and body is presented, we have all to acknowledge the wonder of that unknown energy by which out of air and water, out of vegetable and animal, the unseen something within is extracting perpetually the thing we call our visible selves.

What is quite certain also is that the outside world, as we recognise it, is a distillation of our own mind. When we speak of seeing sun, moon and stars, the world and our fellow men, what we mean is that we receive certain ether vibrations on our retina, which are translated, by some process unknown, into sensations, to which then, by another process, we attach certain ideas. In a sense we all make our world. That it agrees with the world our neighbour makes is, we may say, a guarantee of harmonious mental co-operation, and a help to the belief that our sensation has some solid relation to the outside reality. But what, after all, lies behind sight, touch, hearing, and our other sense perceptions is ever the unknown. We know our distillation ; that is all.

With that as a beginning—a somewhat bewildering one it must be confessed—let us come to some processes in which we may feel more at home. On this theme we find ourselves dealing, not only with our individual consciousness, but with that universal consciousness, that world soul, if we may so term it, in which our own swims, and of which it forms a part. We belong, we discover, to a mental universe which has been made what it is by an

age-long series of distillings and extractings. Our language is one of these results. When we use such words as "whiteness," "humanity," any abstract term in short, we are handling mental tools which it took our remote ancestors thousands of years to fashion. Out of a multitude of objects constantly presenting themselves to his mind, man, bit by bit, sorted out words that covered not only one of these objects, but a multitude of them, and enabled him to think from the particular to the general. A more striking mental distillation is that of scientific discovery. An observer, planted down amidst a heterogeneous congeries of apparently isolated facts, watches, compares, experiments, until, it may be suddenly, as in a flash, there takes place in his brain a kind of precipitation. Out of the seeming confusion he has extracted a law which makes all plain. Or he has struck on the application of a force—steam it may be, or electricity—which henceforth quadruples human powers. What has come to this solitary soul, this new distillation from the outside, comes next into the world-soul. The new generation is born with this extraction—this fresh power essence—as part of its inheritance. The world-soul will continually add to these acquisitions, until it becomes mighty beyond our present dreams.

Where this view of things grips us as individuals will, however, be seen more clearly when we study some of its practical applications. We note, for instance, how our spiritual culture to-day is an affair of inner distillations. Take, for instance, the present position of religion. It is offered to us externally

as a matter of Bibles, of creeds, of churches, and their allied institutions. A great deal of the material here is crude enough. Much of what our fathers accepted as facts has become legend. Many of the credal statements held throughout generations as necessary to faith are to us incredible. We can no longer say *credo quia impossibile.* Yet faith lives and the churches thrive. Never was religion more active, more potent in the lives of men. Why is this? We discover the secret in the soul's method of inner extraction. The institutions, the theologies, the sacred books are there, and of service, not for what they are in themselves. They are the materials in a process. Out of them, with all their roughness, their inequality of value, their nearer or farther approximation to fact, the soul, by its own infallible methods, has in each age extracted the nutriment it needed, and to-day its organs are performing the same office. It is not because the churches have maintained this or that opinion that they have lived. It is because they have stood age after age close to the souls of men; stood there with a history, an example, a force, out of which these souls drew love and courage, and the spirit of brotherly service. The material itself is, we say, open to every criticism, but these essences extracted from it are beyond criticism, and are the life of the world.

The truth of this statement can be discerned by anyone who cares to study history. We make the direst of blunders if we judge of the Church's function in any generation by its outward symbols. Am I to judge of the early Benedictines by their

theology? I think rather of them issuing in the sixth century from Southern Italy to cover Europe with their faithful labours, making waste places fertile with the toil of their hands, and preserving for us the ancient literatures by the labour of their brains. Is the thirteenth century Church a mere triumph of the Papacy? We look beneath to see a spirit developed as truly evangelical, as passionate for truth, for righteousness, for the soul's freedom as the world has ever known. Nay, for a proper view here we must extend our survey beyond Christendom. Let us read our Plutarch on the true inwardness of the ancient religious feasts. Says he: "For it is not abundance of wine and well-baked meats that gladden our hearts in a religious festival; it is our good hope and belief that God Himself is graciously present and approving our acts." The outward material here, we say, is "a pagan festival." But words like these show us how true souls extracted from the materials their age and place offered, those essences of faith and love which are religion's highest and ultimate meaning.

It is most interesting, in this connection, to note how men who have fought most stoutly for their own separate formulas have come sooner or later to realise the truth of our doctrine here. They find that the root of the matter lies not in the "ism" they quarrelled about, but in the distillation it yielded. Wesley in his old age declares himself sick of opinions. "My soul loathes the frothy food. Give me solid and substantial religion; give me a humble, gentle lover of God and man; a man full of mercy and good faith, without par-

tiality and without hypocrisy ; a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. Let my soul be with those Christians, wheresoever they are and whatsoever opinions they are of." On the opposite side let us hear Martineau. "In Biblical interpretation I derive from Calvin and Whitby the help that fails me in Crell and Belsham. In devotional literature and religious thought I find nothing of ours that does not fail before Augustine, Tauler and Pascal. And in the poetry of the Church it is the Latin or the German hymns, or the lines of Charles Wesley, or of Keble, that fasten on my memory and heart, and make all else seem poor and feeble." We may go beyond Martineau to Huxley, who testified in a letter to Kingsley that, outside theology, life had taught him a deep sense of religion, that love had opened to him the sanctity of human nature, and impressed him with a deep sense of responsibility. These men in their several stations had been surrounded with materials widely differing in outer character. They belonged to schools of sharply opposed thinking. But it was not these oppositions ; it was the invisible essences their souls drew from the outward surrounding that make their memories alike dear to-day to all who love truth and goodness.

As with outside substance so in the soul there are double and quintuple distillations. A man pours his discourse upon me. It is powerful because it is the essence of his own life experience. But to be of profit to me I must make an extract of this extract. We do the utmost damage to ourselves if we allow any other man to make us in his own

image. I must instead distil from his individuality the drop that feeds my own. It is also in the light of this doctrine that we discern the meaning of the human passions. We understand by it that striking phrase of Vauvenargue's that "we perhaps owe the greatest advantages of the spirit to our passions." The man who prospers most inwardly is not the monk or ascetic, who denies half his nature. It is he rather who, recognising within their true limits the social and passional instincts, uses them as material from which, in co-operation with the higher spiritual powers, he develops that highest love in which he sees his relation to the Divine nature.

There seems no limit to this power of the soul. It can distil and doubly distil, until it has become a repository of all the forces. From the rough experiences of his life a man draws the need and then the power of faith and of prayer. These first spiritual acquisitions become in their turn the material for others, more refined and yet more powerful. The process, in some great natures, has continued until their simplest word has fallen as fire on the souls of men, and kindled conflagrations there.

The doctrine, so potent in its applications for this life, supplies us with what seems the best of clues to the life beyond. All the distillations are a step upward; a movement from a lower to a higher quality and power. On this analogy death will be the human step upward. It will be the transmutation of our experiences here—our sorrows, joys, knowledges, our triumphs and failures—into an existence which is the essence of them all, while immeasurably more than they.

XX

Our Unordained Ministry

The education question has had a front place on the national programme for some years now, but it is doubtful whether the English people are yet awake to its real significance. We are deep in the politics of the matter. What is called "the religious question" absorbs public attention. And religion here stands for the quarrel of the denominations. When we talk "education" we mean the legislation of recent years. But this phase of the question, important and exciting though it be, is after all merely temporary and incidental. It is only when we are through this debatable land, at its farther side, that we face the real facts of the position. The actual question, beside which all other matters are trivial, is as to the making of England, and the part our schools are to play in the process. That, we repeat, is the aspect of education to which the nation has yet to be awakened. It is not in the least degree alive to the potentialities hidden in the common school. The religious bodies have of late been much exercised as to the actual influence they are exerting upon the national life. They are in doubt as to whether it increases

or declines. The statistics of church attendance have certainly had no great encouragement to offer. They show a vast and growing population that lies outside their reach.

But side by side with the church, with its empty seats, stands the school, which is always full. Here is a teaching institution, the church, shall we say, of the young, which knows of no dissenters and practically of no absentees. It is the one moral instructor left us which can back its appeal with authority. There was a time when the Church had this power. Buckle, amongst others, has given us a vivid picture of Presbyterian ascendency in earlier Scottish days, when non-attendance at service without adequate reason was visited with heavy penalties. But the Church to-day, of whatever name, in Scotland as elsewhere, has lost its coercive power. Its only claim on the multitude is by the attractions it offers.

But the school, as moral and spiritual guide, has other present-day advantages over the church. Its congregation, vast with the vastness of the entire juvenile population, and subject to no vicissitudes, to no ebb and flow of popularity, is a congregation meeting not for one day in the week only, but almost every day. Here is an influence which, instead of obtruding itself once a week, as does the church, into a whirlpool of other and often conflicting forces, occupies for a term of years practically the whole mind of the pupil. More than that. The school possesses this unlimited sway at the time when of all others the soul is most impressionable, the most retentive, the most plastic to the hand

that forms it. Nothing holds us like the early memories. They have the supreme advantage of being the first in the field. The old man, who forgets all else of his life, remembers the things of his boyhood. The mind becomes afterwards a palimpsest on which a thousand other characters are imprinted. But the school teacher has the first use of the parchment.

This, then, is the situation. The England of the future is being mentally and morally born in the common school. Here its shape and size are being given to it. According to what our school is the nation will be. Are we clear yet as to *what* our school is and ought to be? Have we taken the correct measure of this stupendous instrument? Have we inquired as to the kind of work it should be set to? Have we properly estimated the position and responsibilities of that vast army of teachers of both sexes who are its directing forces? Are they in their turn awake to the real magnitude of their calling? Do they know themselves as, though unordained, the greatest ministry which England to-day possesses? It may be well, in the light of questions of this sort, to probe the position a little more closely.

We have spoken of the common school as the children's church, of the teachers as an unordained ministry. But this, it will be said, is just bringing us back into our present squabbles. Instead of keeping outside the debatable ground it plumps us into the very middle of it. It is the religious question over again. Yes, truly, we answer, a religious question, but not that of the old contro-

versies. The present need, as we conceive it, is for a view of the school and its functions which shall at one and the same time stay the religious quarrel and recreate the nation. A recent book which has created much attention, has been published under the title, "Bushido; or, the Soul of Japan." The point now is whether there be not such a thing as "the soul of England," and whether that soul cannot be made the inspiration and the governing power of our school life.

In the work just mentioned we are told how certain ideas, sentiments and traditions, handed down from generation to generation, and wrought into the very fibre of the people, have made Japan what it is. In that exposition we have the key to the secret of effective education. It is first and last an affair of soul. Amid the clash of our present controversies there is a thing on which all honest men are agreed, and it is that the one prime asset of a man and of a people is character; the one problem is how to produce it. The school that cannot get this as a result, whatever else it can offer, is a failure. You may teach handwriting and equip a forger; you may have a chemistry class and turn out expert poisoners and bomb-throwers. "Clever men," said Huxley, "are as common as blackberries; the rare thing is to find a good one."

But how are we going to get character, virtue, our "good man," out of the school? Plato, in more than one place, elaborates the thesis that virtue cannot be taught. And assuredly you cannot teach it as you teach arithmetic. And you cannot get it, though masses of men are not yet convinced

of this, by teaching theological dogmas. Of all the experiments for putting a soul into the new generation, that of compelling it to parrot off abstruse metaphysical propositions to which the boy and girl mind brings neither the remotest comprehension nor the slightest sympathy, is at once the most dismal and the most stupid. Moreover, the now proved impossibility of bringing the rival denominations to any agreement in dogmatic teaching bars the way to any further experiments of this kind in the common schools. We have to face the problem of securing the one prime asset of character, of getting into the body and brain of our youth the highest soul of the nation, apart from the catechisms of warring Churches.

Is there a way? For answer we have only to question the human experience. And, fortunately, we have for this purpose such an array of evidence as never before has been open to the inquirer. We have a world-history which goes back for thousands of years; we have documents, books and monuments which lay bare the secret of all the religions. And from them we can with some certainty deduct the way in which virtue has been acquired. We learn that if it cannot be taught it can be caught—as a contagion is caught. Inside of every religion has been a soul, and it is this soul whose secret essence has penetrated the human heart and stirred it to goodness. This soul of the religions offers nothing to fight against; it is not a dogma to be combated, but an atmosphere to be breathed. It has dwelt in different degrees in all the nations and all the faiths. We are learning

now the varying expressions which it took amongst the peoples. Even the definitions are wonderfully alike; but we discover that the spirit was always greater than the definition. Listen to some of its voices. The religion of Zoroaster, according to Beausobre, consisted in "purity of faith, in sincerity and honesty of speech, and in the justice and holiness of actions." In China, Lao-Tse gives as his great principle: "To the good I would be good. To the not good I would also be good, in order to make them good." In Greece, we know the insistence with which Socrates taught that it was infinitely better to suffer injustice than to do it. In India, the Buddhist King Asoka defined religion as "the least possible evil, much good, piety, charity, veracity, and also purity of life."

In England the moral driving power for long generations has been Christianity. But the power here has not been the theological formula, but the soul which the Gospel contained and the personalities in which it lived. A man may oppose its formulated doctrine of the Trinity, or of the Eucharist, but no man opposes its fountains of tenderness, its spirit of philanthropy, its passion for purity, its aspiration for the perfect. The best men in every age have seen that its reality lay here. Zwingli says so in his declaration that "faith does not depend on the discussions of men, but has its seat and rests itself invincibly in the soul." Pascal from his side finds the same thing; the perfect faith, he holds, is God felt in the heart (*Dieu sensible au cœur*). And Froude expresses the mind of our time in his plea to "have done with theological

refinements. There is an excuse for the Fathers because the heretics forced them to define particular points. But every definition is a misfortune. . . . Inquire if you will, but do not define. Then we shall have no more quarrels, and religion will take hold on life."

Now it is this undefined soul of Christianity, as exhibited in its love, its purity, its fidelity to duty, its reverence and aspiration for the highest, by whose means the schools, without hurting any man's conscience, may be made the regenerators of England. This soul, to find its way into the new generation, must be incarnated in the teachers who instruct it. Religion is to be, not on their lips as a dogma, but in their hearts as a life. It should be found in the school not as a babble of catechisms but as the ceaseless intake of an atmosphere. At work in our schools we need not merely the drill of the daily lesson, but also a contagion of goodness. It was a conviction of Cobden's that good examples are more influential than bad ones. And nowhere does a good example tell so mightily as upon the soul of a child. Here are your true hero-worshippers. At such an age the simple passing of a good man, a stray word from him, may leave an indelible impression. When Wellington was a boy, Wesley, who was of the same family, gave him a Bible, the "Imitation," and a book by Jeremy Taylor. The Iron Duke continued to read these to the end of his life.

The whole bearing of this argument narrows then to one point—the teacher. The tens of thousands of our English men and women who

have given themselves to the work of the common school, are, we believe, amongst the worthiest of the land. We shall not offend them however, we trust, when we say that great masses of them have scarcely risen yet to the full height of their vocation. They have not realised how great their office, how vast the trust reposed in them by the nation. The worst is that the nation itself does not realise it, and so belittles their work. But that must end. Carlyle, in a memorable passage, gives his view of the transcendent value to the State of the true schoolmaster. Scotland has been made by its schools, and England can be. Far be it from us to underrate the power of the Churches, and of whatever other moral forces are at work in our midst. But we repeat the destinies of England lie in our schools. We shall be on the way to the greatest things when our teachers, "our unordained ministry" by study, by self-discipline, by every physical, mental, and, above all, by every spiritual reinforcement, seek to gain the fullest height of their own soul, that upon those little ones, who are the nation that is to be, they may pour forth the treasure of its secret life.

XXI

The Solitaries

THAT is a suggestive word of Charles Lamb where, in a letter to Coleridge, he speaks of "the silent thoughts arising in a good man's mind in lonely places." For truly it is life's "lonely places" that have been among our chief formers and teachers. It is the men who have loved solitude and understood it—the true solitaries—who have been the mediators to humanity of its most precious things. Nature, one might think, had taken this into special account in fitting up the earth for our dwelling-place. She has made provision for the solitaries. The race grows with amazing rapidity, and we talk of our overcrowded world. But there are silent spots in it yet, and will always be. And how immense is their attraction! The great mountains draw us partly because, in their aloofness and upward pointing aspiration, they are the image of our own soul. Do our readers know that view of Mont Blanc from Sallenches? We have gazed upon it time and again with an indescribable fascination; and always with those words of Michelet in mind: "From a close view-point one sees it in all its loftiness, alone, an immense white monk, buried

in its cloak and hood of ice, dead, and yet standing erect. . . . Mont Blanc leads nowhere; it is a hermit apparently, wrapped up in its solitary musings."

The sense of solitude, so far as Nature can give it, reaches its highest point at night among the mountains. The present writer will never forget the sensations of a moonlight ride through a lonely valley in Norway. Beyond the rock wall that enclosed us we caught glimpses of interminable wastes of ice and snow, gleaming high up there in the cold rays of the moon. The imagination flew into the far recesses of these inaccessible heights, and drank its fill of their awful silence. We seemed to feel here

> The wind that shrills all night
> In a waste land where no man comes,
> Or hath come since the making of the world.

But these far retreats of mountain and of wilderness are not the only silent places of the world. It is not on glacier or snowfield merely that life offers us the sense of solitude. Men and women who never stirred from home have tasted the full flavour of it. It is a part of the human education that none of us misses. But it requires a special taste to appreciate it. To some the training is entirely irksome. Pascal is perhaps right in his remark that "there are so few persons capable of enduring solitude." Certainly he is in that other word: "The man who lives only for himself hates nothing so much as being alone with himself." But a countryman of his, a century before, had had an education in this line of which he knew the

value. How admirable is that chapter of Montaigne on solitude! Florio, in his quaint translation, gives us the pith of the old Gascon: "We should reserve a storehouse for ourselves, altogether ours and wholly free, wherein we may hoard up and establish our true liberty and principal retreat of solitariness, wherein we must go alone to ourselves, there to meditate, discourse and laugh as without wife, children, and goods, or train of servants; that if, by any occasion they be lost, it seem not strange to us to pass it over. We have a mind moving and turning on itself; it may keep itself company. *In solis sis tibi turba locis.*" (In lonely places be to thyself the crowd.) The old essayist was evidently of the mind of Scipio Africanus, of whom Plutarch records that "he was never less alone than when he was alone."

There are all kinds of solitaries—good, bad, and indifferent, and that in the degree in which they have learned their lesson. But the lesson, as we have said, is thrust upon us all. It is marvellous, considering how naturally gregarious, social, chattering a being the average human is, to note the extent to which he is a solitary. Observe our race as a whole. Humanity is surely the loneliest thing in the universe. Shut off by its height from the lower animals, it looks upward and outward for companions and finds none. There is no interstellar communication. If the shining orbs yonder have inhabitants they have, so far, had no speech with us. The silence of the heavens has been in all ages man's baffling mystery. Lucretius made it the argument of his scepticism. Our own day has been

weighted with the same thought. One poet, in two pregnant lines, suggests the entire modern query :

> When the sky which noticed all makes no disclosure,
> And the earth keeps up her terrible composure !

Another finds here his doubt of Providence :

> Rather some random throw
> Of heedless Nature's die,
> 'Twould seem that from so low
> Hath lifted man so high.
> Through untold æons vast
> She let him lurk and cower ;
> 'Twould seem he climbed at last,
> In mere fortuitous hour,
> Child of a thousand chances 'neath the indifferent sky.

There is, indeed, nothing more striking in modern thought than this sense of this human loneliness, of our apparent isolation in the universe. It has obsessed all classes of thinkers, who have expressed the feeling in their several ways. Lamennais, a solitary if ever there was one, speaks of man as the most suffering of creatures, because torn asunder between two worlds. Taine, sceptic and hopeless, bemoans humanity "dragging its incurable hurt along the roads which Time opens to it." Schopenhauer, destroyer that he is, is yet sure that the mystery has some deep solution behind it. "If this existence were the ultimate goal of the world it would be the most senseless ever contrived, whether it were ourselves or any other who fixed it."

But this apparent isolation of the race as such,

so baffling to the human intellect, so trying to its faith, does not complete the statement of our solitude. On the life journey there come to us varieties of it, each with a flavour of its own. We doubt if there is ever a keener sense of it than some children have. The world is so much stranger to them than to us, its unknown so much more terrifying. The agonies endured by voiceless little souls left in the dark form indeed one of the tragedies of unwritten history. Lamb's statement of his own terrors is, we are sure, not overdrawn. "And from his little midnight pillow this nurse-child of optimism will start at shapes, unborrowed of tradition, in sweats to which the reveries of the cell-damned murderer are tranquillity." And who, but those who have experienced it, can sound the depths of desolation opened in the heart of the timid schoolboy, who, away for the first time in his life from home, awakes in the night to know himself alone in a stranger world! It is a different species of solitariness which awaits us at life's farther end. The sensation of age is that of a world which becomes ever fuller in itself and yet ever emptier for us. There are more faces in the street, but "the old familiar faces," where are they? Steadily that front rank thins, and we ourselves, who aforetime gazed upon it from behind, pushed now into the vacant place, have nothing henceforth to look at but empty space and the coming end.

But before that stage is reached there await many of us special solitudes of the spirit, painful, pleasurable, never explainable to our fellows,

but always, we discern, fruitful in their results upon life. The great minds, the leading spirits, are by the law of their nature solitaries. To ascend is to put a distance between ourselves and the crowd. Summits are cold, lonely places. The penalty of greatness is to be out of touch with the non-great—humanity's larger half. And the isolation is at times terrible. "I felt for her," said Tennyson once of the Queen, "all alone on that height. It is dreadful."

> The true gods sigh for the cost and the pain
> For the reed which grows nevermore again
> As a reed with the reeds in the river.

Then, beyond the loneliness of genius, the loneliness of high station, is that of the elect spirits to whom has been committed some high fate of doing or suffering. The path to Calvary has never wanted for its Man of Sorrows. The mid-night shadows of Gethsemane have, in every age, fallen upon some soul bowed there, heavy with the weight of a world. What an example of this, of a Gethsemane of lonely suffering, have we in John Knox's account of his beloved Wishart, when close to his martyrdom! "He passed forth into a yard a little before day. When he had gone up and down in an alley for some time, with many sobs and deep groans he fell upon his knees, and remaining thus his groans increased. From his knees he fell upon his face, and then the persons forenamed heard weeping and an indistinct sound as it were of prayers. Afterwards questioned about this, he said, 'I tell you I am assured that my travail is near an end. Therefore

call to God with me, that now I shrink not when the battle waxes most hot.' "

In the human race as a whole, in its separate stages of life, in the experiences of elect and suffering souls, and, as if sympathising with all this, in the very configuration of our globe itself, we are, then, met at every point with this mystery of solitude, as an essential part of life. What is its meaning? Is it by chance that it happens so, or is there a purpose here? Are we really alone when we seem so? These are the questions. And it is precisely when we study the action of solitude upon the individual soul that we obtain there a glimpse into what man's solitude in the universe really means. He is left to himself that he may grow. It is precisely in this condition that he *does* grow. Gregory of Nazianzen realised that, when he "retired into himself, deeming quiet the only safety of the soul." Wordsworth realised it, "retired in the sanctuary of his own heart, hallowing the Sabbath of his own thoughts." It is thus indeed that all his great thoughts, all his revelations, have come to man. And so his very isolation is evidence that he is guided. His guide keeps out of sight, remains a *Deus absconditus*, but not the less surely does He open up and indicate the road.

We have, then, to comprehend and to accustom ourselves to the Cosmic habit. It is not enough for us

> To bear
> Without resentment the Divine reserve.

We have to understand it and to achieve in ourselves all that it designs for us. It is studies such as

these, of the mere facts of life, that show us faith in the New Testament sense of it, as the only rational solution of our riddle. Our isolation is an insulation. We are shut off from visible signs that there may develop in us the sense and certitude of the invisible Reality.

XXII

The Broadening of Life

The moralist and the religious teacher of our time, as they study the problems the world offers to their thought, are met at every turn by a new difficulty. It is the difficulty arising from the growing complexity of life. Their fathers, in both their thinking and their acting, moved within definitely-drawn boundary lines. The lines limited the view, but in other respects were very convenient. To know exactly the right and wrong of everything; what to accept and what to avoid; to have a formula for every circumstance, a text for each contingency—all this wonderfully simplified matters. Let anyone read the sermons and religious treatises of a generation ago, with their clear-cut distinctions between the Church and the world, between the sacred and the profane, between godliness and secularity, and compare all this with the mental attitude of to-day, and he will understand what we mean. For to-day the boundaries are down, and the community, intoxicated with a sense of freedom and of a new country to be explored, is wandering at large, in imminent danger of getting lost.

An urgent need of the hour is of some fresh definitions which shall include all the new knowledge, and correctly relate it to the business of living. And in no direction is such a reconstruction needed more than in the conceptions of "broad" and "narrow," in religion and life. Both as to the principles involved here and as to their applications one sees a strange confusion of thinking which is reacting disastrously on both communities and individuals. People are making the greatest mistakes, both about breadth and narrowness. They praise or blame the one and the other without any proper reason. It is time we saw the real significance of these terms, and the part they fill in the economy of life.

To begin with, let us be sure of our ground when we condemn, as we are apt to do, the "narrowness" of our neighbour. We talk continually of "narrow" views in religion or in conduct. There are such, undoubtedly, of which we may speak presently; but what we have first to learn on this question is that narrowness is not in itself necessarily an evil. If it were, be sure we should not find it so continually and so deeply wrought into the innermost processes of living. "Here," the observer is compelled to say, after running up against a thousand instances, "here assuredly is nature herself, and she is always wiser than we are." Nature, we find, is narrow as well as broad, and her narrowness is as needful as her breadth. In order to get her results she is perpetually limiting things, shutting them behind her barriers. She wraps her seed up close till its time comes to unfold.

She is continually purchasing intensity at the cost of expansion. If our electric force is to deliver itself, undiminished, at yonder far extremity, we have to insulate it. There must be no talk of breadth here. We cannot have it both ways. When we come to human life we see nature working on the same lines. The genius of a given nation has been nursed by a process of shutting off. The variety which gives the world half its charm has been reached by what we may call a cellular arrangement, in which, safe from outside interference, the separate result has been worked out.

Yet, with this said, and its truth fully taken into account, we find on interrogation that nature, using thus her tools of narrowness, works incessantly towards breadth as a result. Beginning at simple combinations, her tendency is always to a greater complexity. She widens her conception. As we track her up the ascending scale of life, we find in the higher organisms a repetition of the lower, but ever with some subtle twist added. The central directing agency has to take over a larger area of control. The mollusc's simple business of opening and shutting its shell is succeeded in the mammal by a thousand complicated movements. And as the complexity grows there is accompanying it a constantly enlarged freedom. The limpet sticks to its rock; the man roams the world at his will.

When from such studies as these we come to the problems of morals and religion we find a similarity of phenomena which shows us, on a higher plane, the working of the self-same process, under the self-same guidance. Religion, to secure its results

has used, and effectively used, the narrowing instincts, and has therein followed strictly the order of nature. It is the order which tells us that certain blooms, fit for expansion in May, must not show themselves before, on peril of frostbite and destruction. Nature for some of her work makes use of human ignorance just as much as of human knowledge. For a child of months, ignorance is a condition of health. To fill its brain with a man's intelligence, were that possible, would be to kill it right off. Precisely the same thing is witnessed in religious development, both of communities and of individuals.

Christianity, for instance, would not, humanly speaking, have won its victories and gained its position in the world, apart from the employment at certain periods, of nature's method of narrowness. The early Christians concentrated on one side of life. They lost view of some others, but what they gained thereby, for themselves and the future, was worth the sacrifice. A certain insulation was required in the making of a martyr. The feeling which led Ignatius, in view of his approaching doom, to exclaim, "The wild beasts are the road to God"; or which enabled Thomas Hawker, the Marian martyr, when burned at Canterbury, to raise his hands in the flames as a token to his friends that his soul was at peace, required a special cult which had a certain exclusiveness about it. And the faith of the Church, as a whole, was for a long while of too *naïve* a kind to bear sudden expansions. It followed a true instinct in looking askance at new elements. It was by slow degrees, amid much mis-

giving, and after hard fighting, that art and literature, and science last of all, found a place in it. As with the community, so with individuals. A convert in his first rapture asks for nothing beyond what feeds his exalted feeling. Ignatius Loyola tells how, in his early sainthood, he found secular studies almost intolerable. They were the wilderness after paradise. There is, too, the story of a Methodist preacher returning an English grammar offered him by a friend with the remark, that "he could find nothing about Christ in it"!

And all this, we repeat, is, for a certain stage of development, entirely natural, and because natural, wholesome. Remember, too, it is not religion only that has followed this route. All the special experiences, all the expert knowledge by which the world is enriched, have been reached in the same way. Every specialist is a disciple of the narrow. When Sir Joshua Reynolds, asked how long it had taken him to paint a certain picture, replied, "All my life," he was a witness to this doctrine. The curious materialism of the scientists of the Victorian era—a materialism now breaking down at all points—was the narrowing effect of that devotion to the purely physical aspect of things which secured them such signal gains in that department, but at the price of colour blindness to another, even more important.

But nature, so slow, so careful, so conservative in her operations, yet never stands still. The May-time comes, and then her blooms, hitherto so carefully shut up from the wintry blast, must unclose and dare the open. In humanity as a whole,

and in the development of the individual mind in particular, a point is at length reached when the simpler form has to blend with the new elements. Its life is to be enriched by a new complexity. The soul discovers in itself an irresistible instinct to prove all things, to know life in its fulness, in its wholeness. In Professor Royce's phrase, we begin to "look for the whole of ourselves." Outside the circle of the creeds life spreads before us in its wonder and its mystery, and we say with Fra Lippo Lippi:

> This world's no blot for us,
> Nor blank; it means intensely and means good;
> To find its meaning is my meat and drink.

It is when we have reached this point of growth that we are faced with a question which may be said to constitute the peculiar problem of our day. It is that of combining the wider interest with the older fervour. We cannot escape this, for it is part of the inevitable movement of things. A pressing form of this difficulty to-day, which we touch here both for its own sake and as an illustration of the general theme, is the question of the Church in relation to amusements. If we correctly apprehend the doctrine that has here been set forth, there should be room for a settlement of this matter, without the bitterness and heartburning which some sections of the Church just now are exhibiting.

What is the position? Some Christian communities are for extending their operations over new areas of interest. The people, they find, want relaxation and amusement—"a natural want," they

say; "why should we not help to provide it? Why should provision for this side of life be left entirely in the hands of the irreligious, who exploit it purely for their own gain, not scrupling to pander to the lowest passions, not recking of the ruin of men? If billiards is a good exercise, why not provide a billiard-table? If the drama has supplied the noblest extant literature in the world, why should there not be room for a drama in the Christian conception of life?"

To all which comes a reply, and from men of whose worth and absolute sincerity there can be no question. "No," say they; "this thing has been tried and found wanting. To tamper with these things means a direct loss of spirituality to the Church. Your cannot have your billiard-tables and the Holy Spirit. You must choose between one and the other. They are not compatible."

The dilemma here stated is to-day a terribly serious one to many earnest souls. But if we have correctly stated the doctrine of this question there should be no difficulty about its solution. It is all a matter of the stage of development. If individuals or if Churches are at the level where the new complexity is proved harmful, they are better without it, and are right in rejecting it. The flowers must not appear in March that are meant for May. Let each man, each community, judge of their own condition, of what is safe for their highest interests, and act accordingly. With the conservative attitude here we have all sympathy, realising with Goethe that "everything which frees our spirit without giving us the mastery over ourselves

is pernicious." Till a thing can be safely done it were better not done. Not the less certain is it, however, that in the spiritual development of humanity the point will be reached when these diverse elements will be included. They will be included in the consciousness of the spiritual man because they are included in the consciousness of God. And that stage has already been reached by many souls. They have learned the spiritual life as at once an unfathomed depth, and as an illimitable breadth. They pass from one phase to another without loss, but with a conscious enrichment. And the point they have attained will be attained in the end by all. To the common humanity will come at last the experience and the conviction which Browning has expressed for us:

> You've seen the world,
> The beauty and the wonder and the power,
> The shapes of things, their colours, lights and shades,
> Changes, surprises—and God made it all!

XXIII

Politics and Religion

WHAT is the true relation between religion and politics? Is religion necessarily political? Or is it, in the highest view, non-political? Or can it be non-committal? Or, looking from the other side, can politics, with any consistency or success, steer clear of the religious question? Can the principles and the personalities represented by the two sides run on parallel lines without touching?

These questions, be it noted, stand for opinions which have been actually held. There are, for instance, excellent people in England who would regard an interference in politics as compromising their Christian character. "Let the potsherds of the earth strive with the potsherds of the earth" was the reply made to an acquaintance of the writer when soliciting the vote of a devout religionist. And it is curious in this connection to note that the Anglican, whose Church is as to its external position an essentially political institution, which owes its status to an Act of Parliament, whose chief officers are chosen by the Government and sit in the Legislature, is of all others the person to endorse in certain directions the exclusive view of

our devotee. Our good Churchman, who owes everything to politics, cannot endure politics in his Dissenting neighbour. The "religious Nonconformist" may be tolerated, but the "political Nonconformist" is anathema. There are other anomalies both of opinion and of feeling on this subject, which show how confused is the issue in the general mind, and how important it is we should get some clear thinking and some plain conclusions in regard to it.

As a start towards these conclusions, it may be well to glance at the history of the question. In the early world there was hardly any difference upon it. Everything then was tribal, and the new point introduced by individualism had not arisen. Politics and religion were one, because the primitive politics relied always upon a supernatural sanction. The early Judaic constitution, as the Bible shows us, was a theocracy, with a legislation promulgated as from heaven. But Moses was not the only lawgiver who appealed in this way to the unseen. His method was, in fact, a commonplace amongst the statesmen of his time. Thus, we have the Egyptians referring their code to the God Thoth; Minos in Crete receives his from Jupiter, Lycurgus in Sparta is inspired by Apollo, Zoroaster in Persia by Ahura Mazda, Numa Pompilius in Rome by the nymph Egeria. And as with the laws so with the other forms of the national life. Religion was a department and a function of the State. Our question as to politics and religion was, we say, not even in view.

We reach it, however, and in its acutest phase,

when we come upon the history and the principles of Christianity. Was Jesus a politican ? In one sense, we may say the vulgar sense, assuredly He was not. He refuses the argument of force. He knows nothing of lobbying, of the bribe, of "the pull." "My Kingdom is not of this world," is one of His most decisive sentences. The masterly reply to the question of tribute to Cæsar, the refusal to head a popular movement when the opportunity offered, as well as the whole tenor of His teaching, are the commentary upon that utterance. And yet, with reverence be it said, Jesus was *the* politician of His time. He was so in the sense in which Socrates, centuries before, declared he was the only politician in Athens, and that, because his object was to improve the State by improving the souls of the citizens. And it is that newer sense of the human solidarity, by which we realise the essential oneness of life, the intimate and inevitable relation of each part to all the rest, that enables us to-day to see this so clearly. Jesus, the eternal type of the spiritual man, has shown us for all time that religion is in the high sense necessarily political, and for the reason that, as a reality, it permeates every feature and aspect both of the individual and the communal life. Without aiming at what are called political results it achieves these on the greatest scale. Thus is it that the prophet is always a founder or a reformer of the State.

It is worth remembering here that this was precisely the view which those shrewd worldlings, the heads of the Jewish State, took of Jesus and His work. Whoever else failed to recognise it, they

saw, with the clearness of self-interest, the political aspect of the matter. To them Christ was the most dangerous of revolutionaries. They would have accepted Camille Desmoulins' definition of Him as "le sansculotte Jésus." Annas and Caiaphas had no illusion on this subject. The teaching of the Galilæan, whatever else it meant, meant political death to them. It was an indictment of their methods which blood alone could avenge. And so they crucified Him.

We have here, then, a political action which from beginning to end was purely ethical and spiritual. But it would be easy to mistake the inference this carries. The whole of Christianity is not contained in its beginning. The first believers, the early missionaries of the Cross, had not the entire problem before them as their successors had. It is one thing to start a new spiritual movement in a country, leaving the whole business of administration to its existing holders. The situation is changed when the movement has reached the top, and is felt and accepted by the administrators themselves. In the one case you can be entirely spiritual; you are, in fact, shut up to that. In the other you have not the souls of men only, but the whole national and communal problem before you; with the question: "How is the new religion to work upon that?" And the history for long and troubled centuries is one of experiment after experiment in getting this question answered.

The beginning was when Constantine, master of the Roman world in 315 A.D., made Christianity the religion of the State. The faith which hitherto

had worked from the bottom upwards was now to work from the top downwards. Politics were to become religious, and religion political in a new way—a bad way. For in both it meant the employment of force in a sphere where force is absurdly out of place. Emperors, by their civil authority, dictated to Church Councils what was to be proclaimed as the true belief. As though the mind's belief can be compelled by anything that is not mental! Augustine, following in this vicious track, found in the Scriptural admonition "compel them to come in" an argument for persecution as an aid to conversion. For ages kings and priests were allied in this conception of things. They both believed in force as the supreme religious agent; their only quarrel, and it was a fierce one, was as to which should wield it. Charlemagne, when he conquered the Saxons, offered them the choice of baptism or the sword, and made them believers on those terms. But he dictated to the clergy, from the Pope downwards, as to their position and duties. On the other hand, as early as the fifth century, we have Pope Gelasius declaring the spiritual power superior to kings; a doctrine which Hildebrand and Innocent III. at a later day carried to so supreme a height.

Early Protestantism had no clearer ideas on this subject than its rival. The Protestant Churches were, for the main part, frankly political. Lecky does not scruple to say that Anglicanism was "created in the first instance by a Court intrigue." Zwingli's ideas of a Christian State were avowedly Erastian. Calvin gave Geneva a constitution in

which the spirituality ruled by political force. He had no scruples about persecution. He exhorted the Protector Somerset in England "to punish well by the sword heretics and fanatic gospellers." Knox fought for a similar system in Scotland, and advocated the execution of Gardiner and other Romanists. Lutheranism had the same story. The religious peace of Augsberg in 1555, with its principle of "*Cujus regio, ejus religio*," in which Protestantism received from Charles V. a legal status, made a man's religion an affair of the country he lived in. The careful student of history has, in fact, to admit that the Reformation in England and Scotland and, on the Continent, in Denmark, Sweden and Norway, and some of the German States, in so far as it was carried into effect by the governing classes, was on their part more a scheme of plunder, of appropriation of the Church lands, than a religious movement.

This view of the relation of religion to politics, the view, that is, of making religion a department of the State, has in all the modern countries where it has been tried produced two curious results. One is the creation amongst the educated classes of a philosophic indifferentism, such as that of Montaigne in France, and Shaftesbury and Lord Melbourne in England, a view which regards religion as merely a useful instrument of government, and, on the other hand, of a Nonconformity which has been always a reaction from the State formalism towards a deeper and more genuine spiritual life. Nonconformity seems in religion the Hegelian opposite which is necessary to complete its idea.

Protestantism was the Nonconformity of the sixteenth century, a Nonconformity which, be it remembered, produced not simply the moral reformation of the Protestant States, but the vast counter-Reformation in the Roman Church which transformed and renewed it. The Nonconformity of England has had the same twofold result. Not only has its influence been felt as an incalculable moral force among the classes it has directly influenced, but it has acted with a scarcely less intensity upon the Establishment to which it is a rival. Some of the best influences at work to-day in Anglicanism, as well as some of its most potent personalities, are easily traceable to Nonconformist sources.

We have not yet reached the final solution of the problem of religion and politics. The best minds are clear about the negative issues. They see that in the sphere of conviction force is no remedy. To apply force to compel belief is not only cruel, it is ridiculous. Force may produce fear, may compel submission, but never belief, which is an affair purely of the mind's answer to evidence. But the positive side of this relation is, we say, still in a formative stage, and that because our notion both of religion and politics is also in that stage. What we are reaching towards is a position in which all politics will be religion. But in a new sense. For in this later, and, we may say, final view, politics will be regarded as the form in which the common human life is to express itself; while religion will be accepted as the inner spiritual force by which that life is developed, purified, and

lifted to its highest term. But these two things are one—one as inner and outer, as the convex and concave of a circle, as the body and soul which make the one personality. In this sense, to be truly religious is to be truly political, and to be truly political is to be truly religious.

XXIV

A Study of Backgrounds

In the summer months English people, on travel bent, often leave their home scenery in search of backgrounds. For foregrounds and middle distances our own island is incomparable. From end to end it is a dream of pastoral beauty. Its landscapes are such as a Cuyp, a Claude Lorraine dreamed in their most inspired hours. But the view has nowhere the gigantic backing of Alp or Apennine. There are effects which the snow mountains alone can offer. If any one wants their spiritual interpretation let him read or reread the first volume of "The Stones of Venice." Yes, the Alps for background. We shall ourselves not easily forget one moment when, on a hot summer day, toiling up the St. Nicholas valley—it was before Zermatt knew its railway—we turned a sharp corner, and had for the first time our vision filled by the gigantic Matterhorn, "the cock that crows over Europe," to use Michelet's term, its solid rock-mass cleaving the very heavens.

But there are other backgrounds than those of Alpine scenery, the study of which, we perceive, may carry us much further than Zermatt or the

Matterhorn. It is startling to note how the great human interests, life's raptures and despairs, its problems and mysteries, its charms, fascinations, retributions, are all matters of background. Everywhere the story is of the thing in front of us, and the thing behind it. It is, indeed, in the perpetual comparison and contrast between these two that we pass our existence; that, in fact, we *have* our existence, and know ourselves alive. Our world-consciousness is a consciousness of opposites. We could not imagine a "self" apart from a "not self," an upper apart from an under, this colour apart from those different ones. Our notion of good relies on a background of not good. There could be no sense of superiority did not the world oblige us with the indispensable inferior.

We note, also, how the interest of life is in proportion to the sharp collision and contrast of these opposites. In a Beethoven sonata we have the climax of effect when, from the crashing thunders beneath, some celestial melody leaps out and sings itself in the clear heavens. All the arts, indeed, are constructed upon this law. There are painters who have lived on contrasts. A typical Rembrandt is, in its colour effect, like a flash upon a thundercloud. Millais, in his "Princes in the Tower," makes the whole picture, with its shadowy forms and outlines, into a background for those few inches of illuminated space in the centre where the pale faces of the doomed lads look out upon us with such pathetic, tragic intensity. The great orators build also on this foundation. A born speaker will not strive all the time for brilliancy. He knows

the human heart better. He can afford to be dry on occasion; to quietly accumulate his facts, to plod through his argument. The experienced listener knows what is afoot. The artist is here preparing his background, out of which, in vivid and magnificent contrast, will by-and-by leap the lightnings.

Nature, we have said, produces her main effects this way. She works by contrast. Some of our most exquisite joys are struck straight out of pain. So much is this so that, built as we now are, a world of perpetual comfort and luxury would be one deprived of half its zest. The joy of a holiday is one-half background—the reaction from hard work and fatigue. The fresh air of the mountain is doubly sweet because of the taste of city smoke which lingers with us. And thus the mere idler never has a holiday. The essential ingredients are wanting. "I pity you," wrote Lamb to his friend Bernard Barton, "for overwork; but I assure you no work is worse. The mind preys on itself, the most unwholesome food." And what would life be without its background of danger and hardship? All the good stories are of pain and difficulty victoriously won through. Perhaps the most delicious of all sensations are those of escapes, of deliverances. When a poor man becomes prosperous he tastes a sensation which the languid air of riches cannot purchase. Have our readers ever known what it is to reach port after wildest tossing and expected shipwreck? There are certain sensations which have to be earned. There is no broad road to them. The way is through a strait gate of peril and endurance.

It is by a curious and terrible perversion of the human mind that this law of contrast, of the background, has been used to obtain pleasure by the spectacle of others' suffering and misfortune. It is to us difficult to conceive that men in any stage of civilisation should find their enjoyment enhanced by a background of misery. But man, through whole periods of his history, has exhibited this instinct. The Roman triumph required the manacled, humiliated captives in the conqueror's train. The feudal chief derived gratification from the thought that beneath the banqueting-hall where he feasted were dungeons and torture-chambers in which his prisoners languished and suffered. Men, Christian men, carried this savagery into theology and made heaven into a kind of feudal castle, with its arrangement of cells and *oubliettes* beneath. Thomas Aquinas writes with entire complacency that "the blessed in heaven will behold the tortures of the damned, that their own beatitude may thereby be increased." And what a passage is that in which Tertullian, in the "De Spectaculis," allows his fiery Punic blood to exult over the coming fate, in hell, of the pagan world! "What theme excites my admiration? What my derision? Which sight gives me joy? . . . I shall have a better opportunity then of hearing the tragedians, louder voiced in their own calamity; of viewing the play-actors, much more 'dissolute' in the dissolving flame; of looking upon the charioteer all glowing in his chariot of fire; of witnessing the wrestlers, not in their gymnasia, but tossing in the fiery billows." This, of course,

is not Christianity, but African savagery. One might, in fact, study Christian theology, in its progress through the ages, simply to note its separate stages, the struggle of the original brute nature in the theologian, with the actual mind of Christ.

Another curious form of mental background reveals itself in the history of certain movements. One notes, for instance, how the success of a religious leader and his cause depends not merely on the qualities of the leader, or on the goodness of his work, but to an equal degree apparently on a certain background of circumstance. The odd thing is that these circumstances are continually being deprecated by the worker as the very evil against which he is striving. The mission of a Luther, of a Wesley, obtains its immense vogue from the lack of anything similar at the time. The previous absence of what they bring is the hunger which gives savour to the meal they supply. Were the thing they brought already there, our reformers had been superfluous and their career a fiasco. A famous Congregationalist preacher of the last generation, John Graham of Sydney, tells the story of a religious meeting he held in the bush. Notice had been given of it, and the hardy diggers and shepherds had flocked to the rendezvous from far and wide. Numbers of them had not been at a service for years. The preacher, who knew how to put the great truths in homeliest fashion, was enormously successful, and one can see why. He was playing upon a great hunger. All the memories of childhood, all the unsatisfied aspirations of solitary after-years, all the deep undercurrents of

religious feeling rose in the rough bosoms of the listeners, and flowed into one mighty stream of passionate emotion. They would not let the preacher stop, and the meeting went on till near midnight. Would it have been thus with an audience full fed with regular ministration? The singular reflection is forced upon us that the very want and spiritual indigence with the evangelist is so accustomed to deplore is in reality his own best ally. It is the indispensable background of his work.

In these instances the background is, we see, in a lack, an emptiness, a hunger. More often, however, it is something positive. Philosophers have speculated somewhat cynically on the physical concomitants of moral actions. Burke, for instance, argues that a time of general mortality induces a special outburst of wickedness. "It was so in the great plague of Athens. It was so in the plague of London in 1665. It appears in soldiers, sailors, &c. Whoever would contrive to render the life of man much shorter than it is, would, I am satisfied, find the surest recipe for increasing the wickedness of our nature." Renan has the same idea in his "Abbesse de Jouarre." In another direction Taine has argued for climate as at the back of our insular morality. "It was impossible for the Saxons to go in for pleasure in their detestable climate, and so they went in for morality, which they are likely to get in that kind of atmosphere." We accept none of these data. They are a philosophy *pour rire*. Not the less does it remain that at the back of men's actions, at the back of

their characters, lie incalculable elements, unreckoned by their fellows, unknown even to themselves, but which work on them with irresistible power, and the remembrance of which should make us chary indeed of judgment.

The background of men's doings, we say, is, for one thing, the universe; and until we have reached its inner secret we are in no condition for oracular pronouncement about them. But there is another background—ourselves. The quality of my work to-day is an affair of all my yesterdays. And it is not only the quality, it is also the present effect of our work that rests on this background. When a man seeks to influence his fellows, it is his past that empowers or nullifies his word. "What you are," says Emerson, "stands over you and thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary." Goodness, urges Quintillian, is the first qualification of the orator. It assuredly is of the Christian orator. Ophelia gives us the secret of innumerable pulpit failures:

> Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
> Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
> Whilst like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
> Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
> And recks not his own rede.

Man, it seems, cannot in any direction get on without his background. He must lean upon a power behind him. His own past, if it has been reputable, is a constant and invaluable reinforcement. But it is not enough. The great issues demand more from us than either our past or present can

furnish. The heroes have always known this. William the Silent, when told his cause was hopeless, replied: "When I took in hand to defend these oppressed Christians, I made an alliance with the mightiest of all Potentates—the God of Hosts—who is able to save us if He choose." There is, indeed, no background like that. When a man has his back against this wall of defence, he is not to be put down.

We began by depreciating the English background. But often, as we have looked at it, we have felt that the slight is undeserved. For beyond the horizon line have we not at all times the infinite sky, and what background is comparable to that? And human life, when we lift our eyes from its pettinesses, has ever the sublimest of backgrounds. When we look up we must cease to be trivial. Dr. Johnson had engraved on his watch the motto Νυξ γαρ ερχεται—"For the night cometh." It is the thought that lies at the bottom of every serious mind. For such the scene is the symbol of a vaster unseen; and time but the foreground of eternity.

XXV

Concerning Birtns

Man, poet and mystic that he is, in all his literatures has spoken of the new year as a birth. He will persist in projecting the mystery of his own life upon the outside world, and in associating its fortunes with his own. Thus, the year, prosaic enough as a mere annual swing of the planet round the sun, is figured by him as at the beginning an infant of days, passing thence to its youth of spring, its lusty vigour of the summer, its decline in autumn, its old age and death in winter. And in thus associating himself with his world, endowing it with his own fates, man follows a true instinct. For the world, too, is alive with his own life. The last word of the old Hindoo philosophy, "Thou art that," had reality in it. What travellers are we and our world through time and space! We belong both of us to infinity and eternity. How busy our universe is! What traffic through its boundaries! Not only are we spinning round the sun, but the solar motion of which we partake has carried those of us who are fifty years old some two thousand millions of miles from the spot where we first saw the light. But let us get to our question of

births. The first of all births, the birth of the universe, was the first miracle and the greatest. Science to-day is puzzling over the absolute contradiction of an endless variety arising out of what, according to its own hypothesis, must at the beginning have been a perfectly homogeneous substance. Here indeed was a begetting before the worlds.

Not less wondrous is the thought of our own birth, our coming to be what we are on this planet. Think of the chain of births by which we hang! Here are we in the twentieth century, but for the other end of the chain we grope through countless millienniums of dim, warring populations without a history, until we are back at that Pithecanthropus or erect man-ape found in the Pliocene, probably a quarter of a million years old; and still on to the man-like apes of the Miocene period another half-million years further back! We safeguard our births to-day with all manner of moralities, but our life's continuity was maintained through vast periods which knew no morality save Nature's. We are here to-day, with all we have and hope for, because these myriad savage generations, without a single failure, amid all the gusty blasts of that early world, kept aloft the torch of life and handed its mystic flame, brightly burning, to their successors.

Birth is the greatest thing in the world. Here is a force for change, for movement, against which no human thought-structure, however venerable, however authoritative, can hold out. A new universe, says Richter, is created every time a child is born. That is a double-sided truth. Our universe comes with us. So far as we are concerned

it began when we did. But the truth here is not only one of perception. It is one also of creation. The new-comer never leaves the world as he found it. Here is the power that makes all new. The babe is the oldest, the most authoritative of us all. It brings the latest news of the world's secret. It is to start where we leave off, and we are at its mercy. A hoary theology may have uttered its last word; have published decrees backed with ecclesiastical thunders and the authority of a thousand years. It breathes the word infallibility. *Roma locuta est; res finita est.* In vain. The scheme might answer if the same men lived on for ever. But it is birth that kills these pretensions. There comes into this sphere a fresh mind and soul, a fresh generation of souls, that finds in itself a sense, a perception of things, that nothing of the old system answers to; these souls have, in fact, brought with them a new atmosphere, through which they read history and the universe in their own manner. And so the infallibilities go, or reconstruct themselves. Birth is thus the pledge of eternal movement, of an endless inner progression. Nothing is more ludicrous, one might say indecent, than the jealousy of the old against the young. Utterly useless are these exclamations of our venerables at the audacity of their successors. It is they, if they only saw it, who are the presumptuous, for their anger is a revolt against the universal order; it is a proclamation that their worn-out mind, and not that of the Eternal from whom all the generations come, should speak the final word.

Nothing is more mysterious than birth. For ages philosophers have been trying to construct a science and an art of it; they have speculated on the true eugenic laws and sought to elaborate them into State enactments. Plato's ideal Republic is made to rest for its prosperity on a proper regulation of births. The idea is that as we can so enormously modify and improve animal races by such means, so the true human progress must be along this road. And that there is a vast truth here to be explored and applied is becoming increasingly clear to thoughtful minds. All that relates to birth needs to be investigated with the exactitude of modern science, for it is in this realm, as in no other, that are hid the secrets of human well-being. And yet how baffling are the facts! We talk of heredity, but how few great fathers have had great sons! How often, on the contrary, is the son a mocker of the father's character! Marcus Aurelius is succeeded by a Commodus; at the dawn of the Middle Ages Clovis in the West and Heraclitus in the East, doughty warriors themselves, are each followed by a long line of incompetents; Cromwell is succeeded by the weakling Richard.

On the other hand, the men of supreme vigour and capacity spring from the strangest origins. Justinian was the child of a Slavonian peasant. Luther said of himself, "I am a peasant's son; my father, grandfather and ancestors were peasants." D'Alembert was an *enfant trouvé* exposed on a doorstep. Indeed, one might go on without end with examples. When we have made all our investiga-

tions we are as far as ever from answering the question, "What is the origin of genius?" To investigate family history here is to bewilder rather than to inform. We find four or five children born of the same father and mother, brought up under the same roof, with the same environment, with the same teaching. The parents are nothing in particular. What was there in Shakespeare's parents, or Bunyan's? The other children are nothing in particular. Whence, then, has this one of them, who fills the world with his name, derived his gifts? It would seem as though the heredity here, if there be any at all, were linked to another sphere and system of things, than to a physical and earthly succession.

Assuredly, the question of noble birth is not settled by a reference to Debrett. As Schiller puts it: "The question is not 'art thou in the nobility?' but, 'is there nobility in thee?'" If it comes to a comparison of social stations, a man of ability and character may, on the whole, congratulate himself if he begins low down. There is so much more to conquer; so vastly interesting an ascent, and such invaluable lessons and treasures to be picked up on the road. Mr. Carnegie, who knows by experience both poverty and wealth, said recently, after speaking of millionaire's sons, of whom he seems to have a very poor opinion, that "the young man who has poverty for a starting-point, has a vastly better chance of a wholesome and happy life." The "accident of birth," a phrase so often used of our titular aristocracy, is apt to be followed by so many other "accidents" which are not happy ones.

Nature has a wider birth-system than that of the individual. She has her birthdays of nations, of institutions, of religions. It is wonderful to watch here her labour and her bringing forth. The law on this larger field is, we find, the same as with the individual. The newly born takes the material of its system from what it finds already there, but always adds something of its own. When the Western Empire fell finally in 476 under the stroke of Odoacer there was a travail of three turbulent centuries before the new order of the European kingdoms rose to a coherent individuality and life. This new was full of the old, but all transformed and made over again. Imperial Rome had passed away, but in these fresh lusty nations its laws, its language, its institutions found a subtle renewal. Thus does the past eternally partner itself with the future; thus, through all her mighty schemes, does Nature hint her resurrection secret, whispering in our ear that death is never final.

A strange feature in this larger birth-history is that of the seeming false births that century after century have mocked human hopes. Man has continually imagined his Paradise to be nearer than it was. His eye travels so much farther and faster than his feet. His City of God gleams before him in vision, ready to be entered on at once; he grasps his staff for the forward move, to find the splendour vanished. How pathetic, in the light of the world's after-history, those exultant lines of Lucan in his "Pharsalia," in which he predicts the reign of universal peace and brotherly love! How fair seemed the prospect for religious liberty, when

Henry IV. of France, with Bodin and Pasquier as his literary backers, proclaimed toleration as the only policy for Church and State, and offered the Edict of Nantes as his pledge of sincerity! What visions of the perfect social State have floated before the eyes of men from Plato to Charles Fourier! The history since seems so disappointing, and yet these prophets were neither deceivers nor deceived. They were simply before the time. The perfect State, the perfect Church, the perfect brotherhood are not yet. Their gestation is long because their quality is so high. But the world will see them in their time.

There is a yet higher birth than any we have so far spoken of. It is that given us in the words of the Fourth Gospel: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." In his highest realm man finds a birth system, less clearly marked, perhaps, than lower down, but with evidence enough of its reality. The doctrine of the physicist, that life comes only from life, has here also a perfect confirmation. Paul, in that great *rencontre* on the way to Damascus; Augustine, hearing the "*tolle, lege*" in the Milan garden; Wesley, at the Aldersgate meeting in 1738, "finding his heart strangely warmed," with all that followed in their lives, are witnesses, standing amidst countless similar ones, to a fact of the higher psychology, without which human history can never be explained. The "new birth," as these and others have experienced it, is the fruit of an alliance between man and the "something more," as Professor James puts it, which he finds

in his universe. It is the conscious union of the individual with that greater Self which is the spiritual ground of humanity, that "Eternal Word" of whom, as Justin Martyr puts it, "every race of man are partakers." And it is this mystic Divine fellowship, this birth from above, which, in its turn, gives us the assurance of yet another birth in our life story; when the materials we have gathered in our earthly career, dissolved by death, shall re-emerge to a higher form and a diviner service in the realm beyond.

XXVI

Public Meeting Religion

THE question may be asked whether the public meeting, as an organ of expression and as a power in affairs, is not, amongst the cultivated classes at least, losing its hold. Men begin to realise more acutely than beforetime the disabilities of the thing. In a meeting they are so much less free than at their club or their fireside. They cannot smoke; they cannot talk; they cannot move about. The man on the platform is probably a bore, and they are unable to extinguish him. They cannot throw him away as they do their newspaper when they have had enough. They must listen as long as he speaks. And the average speaker, even if not a bore, has probably less of value to say on his subject than the book we can pick up and lay down at our will. There is a constant growth in the modern mind of the sense of independence, and more and more men prefer to get their information in the way that least interferes with it.

The public meeting will, however, last our time and that of many a generation to come. It has had much to do with the making of history, and

will have much more ; and in itself as a function it is amazingly interesting. There is a psychology of assemblies which offers all manner of problems. As we study the demeanour of a crowd we find ourselves in contact with subtle laws of life, with newly-evolved powers of which we are at present largely ignorant, but which, we may be sure, will occupy the science of the future. We see, for instance, here, how, in certain directions, a whole is something quite different from the sum of its parts. You could not at all reckon the quality of a meeting —its feeling, its probable action—from examining the separate qualities of the individuals composing it. This fusion has produced a new entity with a force and character of its own. We are learning to-day something of the mysterious magnetisms which sweep through the earth from equator to pole. There is a still mightier magnetic evolution in the coming together of the thousand life-centres of which a great audience is composed. Shall we ever be able to measure the range, or catch the full effect of the vibrations then set up in the invisible ethers that surround us ?

Observe, too, the miracle that is wrought in this business of public speech. That out of throat, vocal chords, tongue, teeth, lips, we can produce at will, with unvarying accuracy, these myriad sounds; announce them as the translation of our subtlest thought and feeling ; and that these air waves, vibrating at inconceivable velocities, should be caught on the tympanum of our neighbour, and be translated back in his brain once more to the invisibles of *his* thought and feeling, is assuredly

wonderful enough. But that is not all. A public meeting repeats before our eyes the wonder of the five thousand, fed from one tiny store, which does not diminish in the process. The one speech spreads itself over the entire assembly. Each member of it takes the whole; yet his absorption of that whole diminishes no whit the portion of his neighbour. Here, surely, is a mystery of "the many and the one" greater than those expounded of Parmenides! On the other hand, to the psychological whole furnished by an assembly every separate member, though he utters no word, contributes an appreciable part. If we had proper instruments for inner measurement we should be able to register the exact effect which each member of an audience produces on the speakers, and on the psychological entity of the entire gathering. Another department for our instruments would be the progress of inner movement in the assembly—the gradual fusion that takes place under the influence of genuine oratory by which the separate souls, as it were, melt into one and become a kind of huge common consciousness which laughs, sorrows, exults together.

This fusion, in its entirety, is rarely accomplished. A cultivated speaker, with a difficult theme, and delivering himself, we will say, with the cool, average English utterance, will at one and the same time be making a thousand different speeches to the thousand auditors before him. Each man will interpret the speaker's words according to his standpoint, according to the level of his culture and comprehension. It is amongst

the more emotional races, which produce at once the genuine orators and the ideal audiences, that the full magnetic possibilities of speech are realised. The result here is not so much opinion as feeling. The effect, indeed, is largely that of music. The oration is a chant. The sentences group themselves in a rhythmic combination. We have listened to French and to Welsh orators who have in this way stirred the soul precisely as great music stirs it. The words we listen to are creating their effect not by the ideas or facts they impart; they seem, in both the speaker's soul and our own, to be but the foam on the surface of a deep hurrying flood of emotion, that bears both him and ourselves away in its mighty movement.

When we come to estimate the meeting as a factor in public life, we find an accurate and discriminating judgment to be a difficult business. Good and evil are so closely mingled in the part it has played. Froude had a theory that eloquence was a public bane, and that orators were never to be trusted. He divided men into talkers and doers, to the immense disparagement of the former. But the distinction is baseless. There are speeches that are mighty deeds. Cæsar was as potent with pen and tongue as with the sword. Athanasius, Augustine, St. Francis, Luther, Pitt, are names of giants who hewed fresh channels for the human stream to run in, and did it as much by speech as by act. We have to remember here Plato's distinction, in the Gorgias, of the two kinds of rhetoric—one which is mere flattery

and declamation, "the other which is noble and aims at the training and improvement of the souls of the citizens." The Greeks, indeed, had full experience of the good and evil of the public meeting. The government of the republics was largely a government of rhetoric. The art of speech took first place in a liberal education; for in a democracy it was felt that in the faculty of stirring the multitude lay the surest way to power. A Pericles, a Demosthenes held sway by eloquence. Not the less did the wisest minds discern the peril here. We remember Plato's famous comparison of the populace to a huge, passionate animal, and his declaration that the skill of the governor consists in gaining his ends by flattering its humours. It was this aspect of the matter that, doubtless, led him later to speak of democracy as "the worst of lawful governments."

The public meeting as a factor in affairs has, perhaps, nowhere shown a more mixed record than in the story of religion. In some departments of it the influence one must confess, has been of the most sinister kind. And nowhere more notably than in the elucidation of religious truth; in the region, that is to say, of dogmatic theology. The idea of discovering and authoritatively declaring truths by means of public meetings would be scouted as in the highest degree absurd by the modern scientist; yet it is precisely in this way that the Church creeds, which undertake to settle for us the profoundest questions of human life, reached their affirmations. When we try to think of a Newton or of a Darwin proposing to themselves

to accept, in their separate departments, the resolutions of a heated assembly as the proper way of deciding on the planetary motion, or the descent of man, we begin to understand the difference between the fourth century and our own on the criteria of truth. And yet it is on the results of the fourth-century methods that the Church still professes to found its doctrine! And what public meetings these Church assemblies were! We think of the second Council of Ephesus, "the robber synod," where, amid wildest uproar, the Patriarch of Constantinople was trampled to death. We remember how the Council which gave us the Nicene Creed acted under the orders of an Emperor; while a later Council, under the dictation of his successor, fastened on the Church a directly opposite affirmation. At the Council of Trent it was the persuasive eloquence of the Jesuit Lainez that carried the assembly on point after point of doctrinal dispute. To the modern mind the search after truth is an affair of the ripest intellects, to be carried on year after year in silence, by constant, patient experiment and slow deduction. In theology we see truth, or what passes for it, declared to the world on the authority of public gatherings, torn by fiercest passions, swayed by facile oratory, or coerced and dictated to by a tyrant Emperor. That the Church has survived such processes and such nursing fathers is surely the best evidence of the innate, immortal vigour at its heart.

But the influence of the public meeting in religion has not been all of this kind. Misused, it has often enough helped the enslavement of the human

spirit. Into her hands it has been a mighty instrument of liberation. The entire difference between Romanism and Protestantism, one might say, is exhibited in their use of the public meeting. The one has used it for forging chains, the other for breaking them. There was a humble Baptist meeting in London in the early seventeenth century, of which Masson, in his "Life of Milton," thus writes: "The obscure Baptist congregation seems to have become the depositary for all England of the absolute principle of liberty of conscience. . . . It is, in short, from this little dingy meeting-house somewhere in old London that there flashed out first in England the absolute doctrine of religious liberty." One may compare this with what went on in another obscure meeting-house on the other side of the Atlantic, when Dr. Hopkins, of Newport, Massachusetts, preaching to a congregation whose capital was largely embarked in the slave trade, at the peril of his position and livelihood, declared the whole business an unchristian iniquity; and, so saying, started the movement which finally liberated the slave.

The fortunes of Protestantism have hitherto been linked largely with those of the public meeting. Its worship, its propaganda, have been through the popular assembly. Its force has been largely in speech, in preaching, in the enthusiasm, the emotion of the crowd. It was thus that Luther, Zwingli, Calvin fought for the Reformation. It was among their gathered crowds that Wesley and Whitefield sowed the seeds of the evangelical revival. It is amid the glow of impassioned oratory that the

religious leaders of to-day stir the multitude to repentance and reformation, and the Church to higher ideals of service.

It may be, as we hinted at the beginning, that with the growth of knowledge, and with a better organised science of living, the fortunes of the public meeting may undergo a change. In religion, for instance, it is possible that to the Catholic era of symbol and ceremony, and to the Protestant era of speech and argument, there may succeed yet another in which the emphasis will be on organisation and the scientific direction of life. But no social development, we may be satisfied, can render obsolete the divine passion of common worship, or stay that marvellous evolution of the higher powers when, under the magic touch of the inspired speaker, a thousand souls melt into one. Indeed, in the common consciousness, shared at such times by a myriad separate personalities, we have the best suggestion of that Eternal Mind which, living in all the forms of universal being, is yet undividedly One.

XXVII

Our Topmost Note

"He has not yet reached his topmost note!" The remark, which was made to the present writer awhile ago concerning a mutual acquaintance, recurred later as offering matter for contemplation. It brought to mind for one thing the saying of Bunsen concerning Gladstone: "Gladstone is the first man in England as to intellectual power, and he has heard higher tones than anyone else in the land." There is a suggestive variation here in the reference. Gladstone, according to Bunsen, had heard tones, whereas our topic is the producing of them. Yet the meaning is essentially the same. For a man produces in proportion as he hears. According to the note that falls on our soul, out of the music that sounds in the invisible, is our life made.

And herein we come upon a fundamental difference between man and the things that surround him. We know matter, in all its forms, by its properties. And these properties are always the same. Oxygen never surpasses itself; it is always oxygen. When we know granite we know its best and worst. We can build it into our wall, or hew it into our statue,

sure that it will neither rise above nor drop beneath its level of quality. There are, of course, hidden possibilities in our granite or our oxygen which a deeper intelligence than ours can see into, but our assertion about them is good enough for practical purposes. And it points, we say, to the whole difference between these things and ourselves.

For the certainty, the knownness, the invariability, we predicate of our oxygen is precisely the element that is lacking in ourselves. We may have had our neighbour's acquaintance for forty years ; have studied all his words and acts during that time ; and yet be quite unable to say that this is the man. The greatest part of him is hid from you, and perhaps from himself. This is specially true of his upper ranges. The mass of us, indeed, fail, in this world, to reach our highest. The precise conjuncture of circumstance necessary for that does not arrive. And so our topmost note is never struck. In a musical instrument all the parts, all the strings, keys, hammers are there, the same now as yesterday. It has its scale, and goes never beyond it. You can strike its top note any hour of the day and be sure of the response. But the instrument we call " ourselves " is not built that way. The Maker of it has doubtless views about it, but they are only partially disclosed. We have our fingers on the keys, and make out something of a tune. But we are quite ignorant of its ultimate range ; and we have the vaguest knowledge, so far, of the music which it is designed to produce

What tyros we are in these matters is seen when we contemplate the various views people have as

to what constitutes life's highest note. There is, of course, a material side about which there is practically no controversy, It is comparatively easy to say when a man is physically strongest, when his bone and muscle are at the top of their condition. Plato, in the Republic, put the elect age of woman as between twenty and forty, and of man as between twenty-five and fifty-five. This, he said, is the period during which they are to produce children to the State. It is a different thing, however, to maintain, as some have done, that the inner life, in its range of sensation and accomplishment, corresponds to this adjustment. Froude, when in a pessimistic mood following on the death of his wife, said to Sir George Colley that "the interest of life to a thinking man was exhausted at thirty or thirty-five." But he lived to revise that judgment and to find old age sufficiently pleasant. There is indeed here, despite some notable exceptions, a general consenus of the best minds in favour of Channing's view that "life is a gift which acquires a greater value every day."

But the point we are now seeking is as to what constitutes the top note, the supreme height of life. The differences of view, we say, are so curious. It takes all sorts to make a world, and each type has on this question ventilated its theory. A Madame du Chatelet is of opinion that "we have nothing else to do in the world than to obtain agreeable sensations and sentiments." The idea exactly fitted a society which Sainte Beuve has delineated as from top to bottom incurably frivolous. There are masses of people whose supreme moment

is the culmination of a debauch. A City alderman was quoted in our hearing as saying that at a certain age all that was left was the pleasures of the table. We will not stop to characterise that deliverance. Other men have found their rapture in battle—Cæsar did and Napoleon. That stout old soldier, Marshal Manteuffel, expressed the warrior note in a sentence which all the great fighters would probably have endorsed: "That elevated sentiment of commanding in battle, of knowing that the bullet of the enemy may call you at any moment before God's tribunal, of knowing that the fate of the battle, and consequently the destiny of your country, may depend upon the orders which you give—this tension of mind and of feelings is divinely great." Doubtless it is, and yet one reflects that beneath this top note in the General what undertones there are of unnoted suffering in his men! Of the great moments of the battlefield we have to say with Horace Walpole: "What is the fame of men compared to their happiness? How many must be wretched before one can be renowned!"

There are people who, as we have seen, place their highest moments in sensation; others, again in action; others, from Plotinus to Wordsworth, have found them in contemplation. And there are still other forms yet to be enumerated. But we may stop at this point to observe that men of all conditions, in seeking what they deem their highest, look always for some kind of reinforcement of their normal self. The reinforcement is not always of the best kind. *Enivrez-vous*, cries Baudelaire in

one of his prose poems; and the exhortation, even by some of the choicer spirits, has often been only too literally carried out. De Quincey reached his thought-paradise through opium, as did Coleridge. Lamb's "Confessions of a Drunkard" were not, alas, pure imagination. His friend Crossley declares that "on one evening, when in manner, speech and walk Lamb was obviously under the influence of what he had drunk, he discoursed at length upon Milton with a fulness of knowledge, an eloquence, and a profundity of critical power which left an impression never to be effaced." That was the top note. But heights attained by such aids have abysses close by. What it feels like to be in them is given in a letter to Coleridge, where Lamb has reached the bottom. "I have been drinking too much for two days running. I find my moral sense in the last stage of a consumption, and my religion getting faint." We see a glint of impish humour in his eye as he writes the words, but the confession is, nevertheless, a sorry one. This is not the true road to our top, as none knew better than he.

The drug and stimulant habit is indeed only a perversion of that law of human life which demands "a something beyond ourselves" in order to the realisation of our fullest self. The poet's muse is a psychological reality. Tennyson's friends noticed that at times he fell into a kind of trance in which he seemed sensible of no outward thing. Says De Musset describing his own feelings: "*On ne travaille pas; on écoute; c'est comme un inconnu qui vous parle à l'oreille.*" The orator has the same experience. His greatest effects are pro-

duced he knows not how. It is as if a divine fury seizes him and carries him and his audience away in the rush of its movement. All the prophets of humanity are inspired, whatever be the form in which they express themselves. Boehme with his seven days' sabbatical ecstasy, Cicero with his "divine afflatus," Socrates with his *daimon*, Philo and Plotinus with their vision-trances are all telling us practically the same thing. They are describing the penetration of the normal mind by the higher consciousness which surrounds us, and which continually makes itself known to the more attuned spirits.

Most strange, most interesting, at times most tragically pathetic, is the way in which men reach their topmost note. There are those with whom it is a solitary utterance, never repeated. Sidney Carton finishes his futile career with a divine act of self-renunciation. There have been many Sidney Cartons. The man at the pit-mouth, drunken often and foul-mouthed, who beat his wife yesterday, goes down the reeking shaft after the explosion and lays down his life in the effort to rescue a comrade. Amid all his blasphemies and his brutalities, that deed lay possible in him. When we imprison men, when we read over them the denunciations of our theology, when we hang them, what we denounce and imprison and hang is indeed a sorry affair enough. But as, in these processes, we operate on our man, something has escaped our touch. In these worst whom we thus handle there was a divine possibility, higher, mark you, than our own present best. Of these also it has

to be said, in Milton's great words, "There is surely a piece of Divinity within us, something that was before the elements, and owing no homage to the sun!" Will not, in the future, the note of society be, with reference to its criminals and failures, not how to punish for their worst, but how to help them to their best?

The cosmic process is a puzzling one, but as we trace its long, sinuous course we recognise that its effort is to get from the world, from humanity, the topmost note. Even the brute forces of Nature are working to this end. Says Aquinas, in his deep way: "Things which have no perception can only tend towards an end if directed by a conscious and intelligent being." And surely they *are* being directed, and "a God orders the march." The suffering of the world has this, amongst other things, for its end. "Is not He who made misery wiser than thou art?" Oscar Wilde, out of the deeps of his prison experience, wrote this: "If the world has been built of sorrow, it has been built by the hands of love; because in no other way could the soul of man, for whom the world was made, reach the full stature of perfection."

Better men than Oscar Wilde had discovered this truth before him. But each of us has to find it out in his own way. We learn, with the mighty ones before us, that the road to our topmost is not just by exquisite sensations, but also by toils and sacrifices and endurances. Gautama was at his highest when he renounced all under the Bo tree, Socrates in his discourse before drinking the hemlock, Jesus as He suffered on the Cross. Wonder-

ful is it, too, and a thought that might well reconcile us to everything, that the road to the supreme sensations lies this way. You have not told what martyrs felt in describing the scorch and bite of the flames. There are sensations within sensations. Said Dr. Taylor, when he reached the stake at Hadleigh. "Thanked be God, I am even at home." Indeed, that ours has been, and is, a suffering world is the greatest thing that can be said of it. Had life been plain and simple, a mere swine-trough happiness, it had not been worth the trouble of history. Its significance is in what it has endured. Since it has been laid upon humanity in all times to be a cross-bearer; to have its Gethsemane and its Golgotha, so, as we read, must there have been also reserved for it a resurrection and ascension, an exaltation to God's right hand.

XXVIII

The Unpurchasables

The world history of late years has offered some singularly impressive examples on the subject of what may be called life's imponderables. Politics and commerce are regions where the lower forces are constantly in evidence, where wealth and material power seem to have undisputed sway. Yet it is just here where the illustrations we refer to have been given ; illustrations which show how matter and force, all-controlling as they seem, are really impotent before a something which is invisible and spiritual. In politics we have had the spectacle of German relations with France. A generation ago Germany attacked and overwhelmed France with its military forces. The conquest seemed complete. And in one sphere it was. In point of arms, in point of strategy, the Teuton showed supreme. He won all in France except one thing —the French soul. And now, after three and a half decades, the truth is dawning on the conqueror that, compared with this imponderable, the milliards, the territory, the military glory are a worthless asset. Germany to-day yearns for a thing she has not. Her best men realise that a nation,

like an individual, cannot live healthily without the love and confidence of its neighbours. And love and confidence are neither to be bought nor forced.

The other example comes from America. Our cousins across the water are suffering just now, like ourselves, from a wave of materialism which is beating with perilous impact upon the country's noblest moral traditions. There is a delirium of display. We read of Lucullus banquets, of fortunes spent on a meal. People meet at receptions not for talk, the healthy interchange of soul with soul, but to exhibit their jewellery. In reading of these affairs the mind runs not on social or mental qualities so much as on the glitter of costume. To describe that one might fall back on Marlowe in his "Jew of Malta," and talk of

> Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
> Jacinths, hard topaz, grass green emeralds,
> Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds.

Life has become a race as to who shall have the grandest house, the finest yacht, the longest purse. But on the American side of this competition some curious things have happened. In the great insurance scandals that so shocked the public a while ago some well-known names were implicated. Men who had the finest Puritan tradition behind them, whose forbears were scholars and saints, who themselves had earned a reputation for refined and scholarly instincts, stood revealed as having bartered these imponderables for hard cash. They discovered later what an altogether curious asset

conscience is. You can sell it. Nothing is easier. No stock on the market is more readily moved. *But you cannot buy it back.* And the tragedy is that the man, once of high aim and purpose, who has disposed of this inner outfit, finds too late that the thing which has passed from him, and that he cannot recall, is the one supreme value he possessed.

An actual understanding of this truth is the world's clamant need to-day. We want a clear teaching, which shall appeal especially to the business man, as to the position of money in any true scheme of life. We have abundant treatises of political economy, all worthy our best study. But when we have understood the theory of exchanges, the currency, the laws which regulate the movements of capital, we find ourselves in front of a question bigger than all these. The currency realm is that of the purchasables. But bordering it, and touching at every point, is a realm of unpurchasables. And we, in the most puzzling manner, are related to both. With money in his pocket, man stands so curiously between animal and spiritual. The beasts do not carry purses; neither do the angels, so far as we know. "*Aut deus, aut bellua*" ("Either God or beast"), used to be said of the hermits of the Thebaid. The proverb has more than a local application. In the twentieth century we feel both inside us, and are continually wondering how, in so strange a composition of forces, to find the resultant. Political economy, that teaches so much, will not teach us this. Ricardo and Mill show the laws of

material wealth, but what we want first and most to know is how these stand to the deeper laws of life.

Political economy is a young science. The world was singularly slow in grasping the theory of the creation and distribution of wealth; but it realised very early how the property question was at every point mixed up with the invisible values. Cicero in his remarks on fortune in the "De Officiis," has a vivid sense of the spiritual side of riches. "Fortune," says he, "should be originally acquired with honesty, without any scandalous or oppressive practices; it should then be made serviceable to as many as possible, provided they be worthy; it should next be augmented with prudence, by industry and frugality, without serving purposes of pleasure and luxury, rather than of generosity and humanity." Here, we see, is a doctrine of capital saturated in its every part with the moral sentiment. The Roman sage, who borrowed here from the Greeks, his teachers, sees that the money question can only be solved by reference to the anterior life question.

A kind of *delirium tremens* on the wealth subject prevails in the world to-day; otherwise it would be difficult to comprehend how anyone could in such a matter miss his way. The pointers are so numerous and so unmistakable. The millionaire can buy all sorts of things, but never the best. The seventy years of lusty health hid in the ruddy growing lad yonder—can moneybags buy that? He may be blind, and that street-hawker across the way, with two eyes in his head, holds a treasure

worth more than the other's millions, and which these cannot purchase. Says poet to Dives, "The land is yours, the landscape is mine." Our capitalist may buy books by the ton to fill his brand-new library. They are the world's classics. Does he possess them? How absurd for him to fumble with his clumsy gold key at the delicate lock which gives admittance to this realm! The key does not fit at all. The scholar, the kindred spirit to these thought-kings, has the open sesame to their enchanted kingdom, while the money-spinner, if he be that and nothing else, must stand outside. He can buy his way to the door, and that is as far as his purse carries.

As long as man is man this must be the rule. The laws here are certain and irrevocable. The imponderables are greater than the things which are weighed, measured and bought. The truth asserts itself in all sorts of ways. At a company which comprised duchesses, peers, a whole crowd of the fashionable world, Dr. Johnson was announced. "As soon as he was come," we read, "and had taken a chair, the company began to collect around him, till they became not less than four or five deep, those behind standing and listening over the heads of those that were sitting near him." Thus did wealth and fashion wait on the man of Bolt-court, with his pension of £300 a year. "*Pauperemque dives me petit*, the rich man seeks me the poor man," cries Horace in his time. The reason in both instances was the same. The Roman and the Englishman had each a life-value which Dives in his inmost soul knew was greater than his own.

The young people, who are to be the creators of the coming generation, need to make up their minds on these questions. At present they seem all on the side of the ponderables. They will have appearances, at whatever cost. Love, it is voted, is not nearly as good as a thousand a year. On one side we see strenuous, fine young fellows, with capacities in them for the best things. On the other side are our growing English girls, who in a right and sane world, should blossom into sweetest wifehood and motherhood. But our scale of living has gone up. There are the social ambitions! Before the heart's demand, before the soul's plea, before affection, strengthened and refined by mutual sacrifice—before these invisibles, which are nevertheless the beauty and glory of human life, the modern code places as primary the mint, anise, cumin of the dresses one must wear, of the scale of one's housekeeping! So our young man keeps to his unshared bachelor luxuries; our maiden waits for the offer of wealth; and the years pass, until they find the best of life, its highest fruitions gone beyond their reach, beyond recall. Traddles, in "David Copperfield," and his bride, "the dearest girl in the world," in the days of their humble but merry housekeeping in the young barrister's chambers, used, as one of their enjoyments to look in at the West End shop-windows, at all the fine things they could not buy, but were so happy without! They got them afterwards, but what was the later prosperity compared with that first treasure, the treasure of youth, strength, hope and love!

Wealth can get to the outskirts of life; it can never reach its centres. It can feed the lower nature and the middle nature, but never the highest. The startling denunciation of riches which we find in the Fathers, in Basil, in Jerome, in Chrysostom proceeded from the sense, not only of the injustice which so often accompanied their acquirement and use, but of the obstacle their pursuit offered to the highest bliss of the soul. Laurence Oliphant declares that "moral truth cannot be discovered by a bad man." We may add, "Nor can it be discovered by the mere wealth-hunter." That road misses all the finest prospects. The soul must be on another track to catch sight of these. Judæa knew this thousands of years ago; so did India, and Persia, and Egypt. They knew, as the Bhagavad Gita has it, "the boundless pleasure which is far more worthy of the understanding than that which ariseth from the senses." They knew, as Porphyry puts it, how "to despise what will not be required when we are rid of the body, and to practise that which will be needed when set free from it." Mammon can feed only a bit of a man; can play upon but one string of his vast instrument, a string which soon wears out and loses tone.

There are men who think they can buy heaven with their money, and so they endow churches and make huge testamentary donations to missions! It is our queer modern way. It will be almost worth dying to see the kind of inheritance these capitalists have by such means secured for themselves in the next world. There are certain curren-

cies—such as Turkish paper money—which shrink a good deal in the process of exchange. But this shrinkage will be nothing in comparison with the drop in value which awaits some properties at the exchange bureau of death. Some of us, for our discipline and eternal good, will discover then how woefully we have misunderstood the celestial currency. We shall have to begin all over again.

XXIX

The Mind's Hospitality

Of the hospitality in which both mind and body are partakers there surely is no more delightful picture than that with which Plato opens the "Symposium." Here are meats and drinks for the appetite, but so much more! Observe the courtesy, the good-fellowship, the wit and wisdom of the company. Uninvited guests in the person of Socrates and his friend suddenly appear. How cordially they are welcomed! The treatment of the servants, too, by their master Agathon is so noteworthy. He will not give them orders. He says, "Imagine that you are our hosts, and that I and the company are guests." Has our civilisation produced anything finer than that, in its gracious delicacy of feeling? And then the banquet, instead of degenerating into an orgy, as was the beautiful way for so many generations in Christendom, becomes the scene of a discussion which reaches the highest realms of thought. That, surely, is the ideal hospitality—a banquet of the soul. But the minds that enjoy such feasts must first themselves have had a long training in the functions of host and guest. Let us look into this a little.

The mind of an educated man is the most generous host in the world. The gates of the house are open night and day, and the stream of visitors is incessant. They come from far and near, and are of every kind and quality, and they find permanent lodging. Recent investigation has deepened the conviction, early entertained by philosophy, that in its back chambers the soul retains every impression that has been made upon it, and can reproduce it under certain conditions. What our immediate consciousness seems to have forgotten, a deeper part of us has not forgotten. We may quote here the French psychologist, M. Maxwell: "The personal consciousness is only a facet of that more general consciousness existing in us, a consciousness where all antecedent experiences are piled up, where all our sensations are registered, be our personal consciousness aware or unaware of them." The mind staggers at the thought of this countless array of its guests, to whose number fresh myriads are added each day, all permanent forces, all active within us, shaping our personality and our destiny!

There are some special aspects of our mind's hospitality which need, above all things, to be understood in our day, so vital is their bearing upon character and life. Every man of us, for instance, has to deal with mental guests of the most opposite character, and the question is, What shall be our reception of them? As illustration of what we mean, here are some of the books which the present writer in the course of his ordinary studies has just gone through. The experience is the more suggestive as it is

entirely ordinary. The list we find includes: "The Autobiography of George Müller, of Bristol," the Address to the Congregational Union of Dr. Forsyth, the two volumes of Dr. Russel Wallace's "Life," and a re-study of Plato's "Republic." The complete list would be much longer, but let us stop at these. In George Müller we have a saintly man, of extraordinary depth of religious experience, the outcome of which was a public work of incomparable usefulness. Mixed with the faith which wrought these wonders there was, we read, with George Müller a profound belief in the full inspiration and inerrancy of every word of the Bible, the book which he studied to the exclusion, in later years, of almost every other. Dr. Forsyth, in a deliverance of remarkable depth and power, advocates a doctrine of Atonement and of grace which Müller would have been delighted to recognise, but combines with it a view of the Scriptures which the Bristol saint would have rejected with horror. In Wallace's life we have the story of a man of genius and of intense sincerity, the intimate of Darwin, of Lyell and of Huxley, who is won from a position of scientific agnosticism to one of religious belief by his investigations in spiritualism. And, finally, Plato offered us for the twentieth time his conception of the perfect life, individual and communal, a conception which knows nothing of the Scriptures, of the Atonement, of the doctrine of grace.

What is to be the attitude of the earnest mind, in its contact with these other minds, all equally in earnest? How shall we save ourselves from utter

confusion amid the Babel of opposing authorities? Of course, there is one way which many excellent people have followed and do follow—that of simple exclusion. They read and hear nothing from the contrary side. There are religionists who know nothing of science, and scientific men who know nothing of theology. And it will not do to be too impatient with this attitude. A wide and sympathetic study of human nature forces more and more upon us the conviction that the power which is moving humanity to its high destinies has deliberately, in many instances, formed and used the *closed* mind for some of the best work. We shall never understand history without recognising the mission of illusion. There are men set to see one side of truth, a side big enough in itself to fill their soul, and to produce in them precisely the force requisite to the doing of their own work in the world. It is when we have properly understood this that we shall avoid the narrowness of calling other men narrow.

But all have not this mission, nor this class of mind. The highest and most difficult task in the education of our race falls to those who see not one side, but all sides; who welcome every guest who brings what he holds to be a truth; who weigh dispassionately each claim, and give it its due place, and who, in their doctrine of life show how these differing voices in their combination make a vaster and deeper harmony. To reach that standpoint is no easy task. It has meant for some of us to journey through a great and terrible wilderness, where at times the fainting soul loses all

expectation of reaching the promised land. He who has known what it is to find his inherited faith shattered by what seemed an irrefutable opposing argument, will understand what we mean. He knows that inward desolation when the heavenly lights which guided him have gone out, and there is without and within a darkness which may be felt. That staggering experience came to the present writer when, as a raw student, he first read Comte. But these mental phases, we find afterwards, are amongst the best features of our training. They are like the recruit's first battle. He knows now the smell of powder. When the guns go off later on he feels none of the first tremors. We can read a dozen Comtes to-day without turning a hair. We learn by this discipline the true function of the negative. It comes not to destroy, but to widen and purify our positive. The "no" of our opponent makes our "yes" fuller than it used to be, and better worth believing. We discover, in fact, that the "no" is not only in our opponent; it is in us, and there always to help the inner building, to clear the ground of rubbish. Knowing all this we join heartily with Kipling in those rollicking but deep lines of his:

> Something I owe to the soil that grew,
> More to the life that fed,
> But most to Allah who gave me two
> Separate sides to my head.
> I would go without shirts or shoes,
> Friends, tobacco or bread,
> Sooner than for an instant lose
> Either side of my head.

In those of us who have reached this point, one irrevocable determination has emerged. It is that of being hospitable to all great thinking and all great living, but to be enslaved by none of it. We are determined on never being tyrannised over by goodness, any more than by badness. To weak minds the reading of religious biography is, in some of its effects, almost as disastrous as dram drinking. The poor souls think they must straightway model their whole selves on this man they read about. They must adopt all his opinions, all his narrowness. It is so utterly wrong. The great fact, the great life are there to instruct, to inspire, but never to dominate us. God has made you and me to be a separate thought of His own, not to be a pale reflection of someone else. We welcome our mind's guests, and all they offer us. There shall be a free exchange of courtesies and good offices. The interview leaves us, let us hope, helped and stirred. But heaven help us if it has robbed us of ourselves!

This openness of the mind will not be an indifference to the character of the guests. Far otherwise. To freedom of access will be joined the most rigid discrimination. Into such a soul a truth, though clad in humblest guise, unpopular, scorned and hated, issuing from the most ill-reputed Nazareth, if it prove its claim, will be admitted. On the other hand the fraud, the unfounded assumption, though splendidly apparelled and heralded with utmost pomp, will be quietly but decisively put to the door.

Finally, the mind's hospitality will have its

most gracious exercise in the preparation for and reception of the highest guests. And here we are thinking not of the great minds that teach us from all the centuries. For these indeed there is preparation needed. The mind must be perpetually enlarged to give them houseroom. But there are greater even than these that come to us. Man is a haunted being. His soul is the playground of spiritual forces beyond his knowing. Behind all our conceptions, our imaginings, is a something unexpressed, deeper than all expression or even comprehension. It is when we turn to this region we understand that "the final mystery is oneself." It is out of its dim shadow-land that all the deepest, newest truth emerges. And it is here, down at the centre, we learn that the secret of life is a spiritual one. Says Emerson, "the foundation of culture as of character is at last moral. If we live truly we shall see truly." It can be put in higher terms than these. The capacity of becoming conscious of the Infinite, which Lotze declares to be the speciality of the human mind, is another way of describing the highest of the mind's hospitalities. For the soul can receive this Infinite. But only in one way. The August Visitant comes to the pure in heart. The blessed are those whose daily vision and whose daily guest is God.

XXX

Of Religious Union

Religious union has a psychology and a history. To see our way into it, to understand the true conditions of spiritual association, we need to study both. The psychology of the matter is comparatively simple. The facts of our nature on which it rests are patent and obvious. The religious feeling, like other feelings, is, as we all speedily discover, subject to enormous augmentation by association and fellowship. A thousand souls thrilled by a common sentiment or emotion become, as it were, an electric power-station, which sends its accumulated force through each component. Each who helps to form the whole receives the full current generated by the whole. The symptoms shown by a crowd would not be felt by the individuals composing it if they stood alone. The influence here is not a merely physical one. When men sing and pray together it is not only the volume of sound that produces the combined effect. The voice of a solitary singer will often thrill an audience more than the thunder of the chorus. The augmented feeling results most of all from a fusion of soul. The one utterance has set a thousand in-

terior organs throbbing, whose unseen vibrations fill the atmosphere, stirring it into psychic waves which roll with cumulative effect upon each separate mind and heart.

We have here a natural cause of religious union, inherent in the human constitution, and which we find at work, producing similar results, throughout the whole period of history. Next comes the tribal system, derived originally, some sociologists think, from the herd organisation of animals. Each tribe, with its totem symbol, had its religion, and modern researchers trace the peculiar intensity of the *odium theologicum*, of religious intolerance, to the fact that in primitive times for a man to disavow the ancestral faith was the same thing as to break with his tribal fealty, to them the first and fundamental law of the social life.

To come now to what concerns us more closely, religious union as related to Christianity. We have here an extraordinary history, crowded with enigmas, which we have by no means solved as yet. Christianity began as a break-off from the religious unity of the nation in which it was born, and the formation of a new centre of fellowship. This centre was a Person, and the principle of union was attachment to that Person. The whole genius of Christianity as a new spiritual departure lay in that fact. Had the Church in later ages correctly interpreted it, what troubles, what cruelties, what unspeakable miseries had been spared the world! The Christianity of the group that gathered round Jesus was a Christianity of admiration and

love. It was an immense feeling, as yet undefined. Imagine the astonishment of these peasants had an Athanasian Creed or a Westminster Catechism been offered them as a correct exposition of their Galilean faith! The thing that dominated them, that held them together, was what Renan has called "the Divine lovableness" of their Master. And that, after all, is the true Christian bond. It is the tie of a subtle, untranslatable spiritual affinity. Christ was the new term in religious evolution round which the higher life of the world instinctively gathered. His voice woke a hitherto unheard music in the soul. Christ still creates that music. The present writer remembers, as if it were yesterday, and will remember to his dying day, the thrill which passed through his being when, as a mere boy, he realised that the Sermon on the Mount was addressed to *him*, that of this spiritual feast *he* was invited to partake! What were all the books of evidences, all the theological arguments, as instruments of conviction, compared with that stir of the deepest nature! It is that same thrill, that inmost essence of the heart of Jesus, as it exhales in word and touch and deed, that ever since has been converting the world.

This, we say, was the Church's first bond of union. But it did not last long. In the first century of our era there were other things in the world besides the new Gospel—things full grown and mighty, which, as events showed, were to play a huge and sinister part in the Church's evolution. And the greatest of these was the Roman dominion,

with its military power and its perfect organisation. We talk often of Christianity as conquering the Roman Empire. Let us not forget the extent to which, in return, the Roman Empire conquered Christianity. Nothing, to the student of the human movement, is more instructive than to see the way in which in those early centuries the original Gospel energy was captured by the old Roman military idea, and turned into its moulds. The Catholic Church of the early and middle centuries was the old Empire reappearing under an ecclesiastical form. The Roman bishop was its Pontifex Maximus; the dioceses, with their spiritual heads, reproduced the ancient provinces with their prefects; monks and priests were the new style of legionaries. The imperial idea of unity maintained by force was carried over undiminished to the Christian society. Augustine frankly taught it; and the popes, with an ever-increasing severity, applied his teaching. Gregory the Great, one of the noblest of them, writing to his agent in Sicily, tells him "he will allow no Manichæans on the Church estates"; he is "to persecute them and reclaim them to the Catholic faith." How the Church proceeded to "reclaim" heretics is seen in a course during which, in Lecky's words, "She shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind." The greatest saints were amongst the greatest persecutors. Fénelon approved the Dragonnades; St. Charles Borromeo recommended the murder of Protestants.

The great break-up of the Reformation brought

many changes and many improvements, but it made small advance towards a true theory of religious union. Force, exerted this way or that, was regarded by Protestants as a legitimate instrument for its promotion. Calvin allowed Servetus to be burned, though he by no means deserves the greatest blame attaching to that transaction. Luther would have no terms with Zwingli for his difference on the sacraments. The smaller sects were as bad. The Münster Anabaptists did not hesitate to put to death any who did not agree with their views. It is, strangely enough, from Catholicism that we obtain in that time the suggestion for a better way. "I would not make violence and bloodshed my means to assert the Gospel," says Erasmus. And what a really wonderful thing, considering the time and all the circumstances, is that utterance of Catholic Sir Thomas More, where in the "Utopia," written, remember, under the nose of Henry VIII., he declares, "This should surely be thought a very unmeet and foolish thing, and a point of arrogant presumption, to compel all others by violence and threatening to agree to the same that thou believest to be true!" But these men were before their time. The real basis of fellowship had still to wait its hour.

What has helped towards the true solution has been science rather than theology. A new cosmic conception has dawned upon the human mind, which throws everything, Church and theology included, into a fresh perspective. We discover that there is a biology of the sects as well

as an ecclesiology, and that the former is likely to chase the latter out of the field. In this view the differences which have exasperated theology and lit its persecuting fires are seen to be nature's effort after variety and individuality. She flatly refused, at Church or any other bidding, to be shut up to one type or species of religious man. She went out of her way to produce fresh specimens and to secure their perpetuation. We are beginning now to see the futility of crossing her great design. We no longer propose to stay the ocean with the mop of Mrs. Partington.

The religious union of the future—it all comes to this—will have to recognise to the full the rights of individual liberty and development, including the right of difference. Spiritual association will be a fellowship of faith, love and service. But the faith will be an instinct rather than a definition. Its inquisition will be a judgment faculty in the interior of each man's soul, not an institution for the excommunication of his brother man. Its union will be for help and cheer, not for coercion and bondage. It will include all who seek truth and yearn for goodness. Its forces will be precisely those which filled the first disciples—the forces of a great love and an immortal hope. This union, in its largeness and freedom, will not impoverish theology. It will enrich it. Precisely as our instruments of observation and of measurement become more penetrating and more accurate, will be the range of the spiritual realm they discover, and the quantity and value of the products they draw from it. With the higher life of this

society will come the forms which best express it. Its level will be the high-water mark of humanity, its growth the highest human progress. And the relation of each to all in it will be that of the noble apostolic word: "Not as having dominion over your faith, but as helpers of your joy."

XXXI

Of Inner Discipline

THE Lenten discipline which, through long centuries, has been recognised in the Roman and allied Churches reaches its height in the days that immediately precede the anniversary of the Passion. In what may be called the inner circles of devotion—in monasteries, in sisterhoods, amongst the clergy—we hear of fastings, of penances, of vigils, carried often to the utmost verge of physical and mental endurance. At the spectacle thus presented the outside world looks on with a mixed feeling. The mind of the age, working with a freedom unknown to earlier times, is observing this side of religion from a new standpoint. It is by no means unsympathetic. It believes in inner discipline, realising its immense import for life. But it demands a basis for it which shall be more than traditional —which shall also be rational. It will, one may hope, be helpful if we look now a little into this subject, as it opens in the light of the modern consciousness.

The world, we say, knows this theme as a great one. Indeed, incomparably the greatest of all man's histories is the history of his fight with

himself. Amiel speaks of our chief function in life as that of tamers of wild beasts. Plato, ages before, had said the same thing. We remember the vivid passage in the "Republic" where he describes that "wild beast in our nature which, gorged with meat and drink, starts up and leaps about and seeks to satisfy his desires, under whose power there is no conceivable folly or crime, however shameless or unnatural, of which a man may not believe himself capable." A Continental philosophy of our day, conceived apparently on the principle of running amok among all the deepest experiences of the race, has ridiculed this whole business of interior taming and subduing. According to Nietzsche, man's prime blunder has been the fight against his animalism. It is an infinite pity that he ever thought of turning the forces which aforetime he used for war, capture and sensual gratification, in upon himself for an unnatural campaign against the primal desires and passions. Nietzsche will have no terms with "this secret self-violation, this burning into oneself a criticism, an opposition, a contempt, a 'No'; this dismal work of a voluntarily divided soul which because it delights to make suffer, makes itself suffer." Paul, the apostle of inwardness, is to him "the much tortured, the much to be pitied man," for whom he has no good word. This kind of talk has had its vogue in circles which pride themselves on "originality in morals." But it is shallow enough. The verdict of humanity is against it. The human evolution has made no such blunder as is here suggested. Man, on his way to be super-man, on his

way from brutal to spiritual, could travel by no other route than this. The "internalisation," the turning of life's fight inward, against which our philosopher exclaims, is the fact which, above all others, suggests at once the greatness and the uniqueness of man's destiny.

This is not to say that in the details of the process there have not been mistakes and perversions. There has been enough of them. It is, indeed, precisely upon this point that the saner criticism of to-day is turning itself. It would fain sift out, from the confused jumble of theory and experience which the past has bequeathed to us, the good from the bad, the elements that make for the proper conduct of life from those which are only the deposits of ignorance and misunderstanding. We have reached here some principles which earlier times failed to discern. We have ceased, for instance, to believe in asceticism ; in privation and starvation for their own sake. We find no inherent virtue in privation. The notion of shutting the eye to the world's beauty, of banning the development of its inner wealth, is to us a barbarism. When St. Bernard, writing to Abbot William against ornaments in churches, says : "We monks who have reputed as filth all that shines bright, or sounds sweet to the ear, what fruit do we expect from such things ? " we regard his mental condition as, in this respect, a pitiable one. Sir Thomas More, Catholic though he was, gives the *coup de grâce* to asceticism in that fine passage of the "Utopia" where he argues that, if a joyful life is in itself an evil, then we ought to refrain from all

that increases the joy of others. But if it is a good to others, then it must be good for ourselves.

These legacies of the past in the matter of inner discipline contain indeed a vast amount of rubbish which it were well to have incontinently swept away. In this category comes the monkish notion of a whole fraternity being drilled and patterned upon one minutely detailed scheme of living. The endeavour to make men by machinery can have only one result—that of making them machines. Ecclesiasticism, in striving for uniformity, is going clean contrary to Nature's whole way of development, which is rather to create variety and spontaneity. The allied notion of monkery, of crushing the individual will and reducing all to one level of passive obedience, is another of the deadly cosmic heresies. What is wanted in the individual is not less will, but more and ever more of it. There is no character in subjection. It is in volition, the subtlest, mightiest, most wonderful thing in the universe, in the fullest, freest, most reasoned exercise of it, that man's value really consists. It is to an ill-instructed past also we owe the religion of solemnity and severity, as though these in themselves were of the essence of virtue and holiness. In a period when the world was conceived to be under a terrorism; when cruelty was deified; when men, with Tertullian and Aquinas, could picture the sufferings of tortured souls as adding to the pleasures of heaven, such a view was consistent enough. But we are emerging from this darkness. We are asking about the

theologic significance of laughter as well as of tears. And by aid of this better conception we are depriving gloom and sourness of their ancient religious vogue. We are with La Rochefoucauld in defining the gravity of certain people as "*un mystère du corps, inventé pour cacher les défauts de l'esprit.*"

But the modern consciousness, in shaking itself loose from ideas of this kind, is, we have said, not less emphatic than was antiquity about the necessity of an inner discipline. But observe the difference of outlook! Not from the terror of vengeful powers, not from a despairing sense of the essential evil of the world; but, on the contrary, from a feeling of the entire good of things, of the glorious possibilities of life, of the limitless destinies of the human spirit, do we to-day find our reason for inward government, for the daily drill and regimen of the soul. Religion and science are one in recognising that the goal to be aimed at, the principle which is to give law to conduct, is the fulness and furtherance of life. And for this fulness and furtherance we perceive that the upper must ever govern the lower. The body in its very configuration is here the image of the mind. The head towers above the stomach, the upper nerve-centres control the reflex action of the lower and local ones. The body here is, we say, the soul's parable. And thoughtful men, of every shade of theologic and anti-theologic thinking, perceive the fact. Maeterlinck, occupying the extremest left of the sceptical movement, insists with the most orthodox that "sterile pleasures of the body must be sacrificed; all that is not in absolute

harmony with a larger, more durable energy of thought." He insists on a reform of our eating and drinking as a necessity of spiritual advance. And assuredly not without reason. In one department here we have made, it is true, a great move forward upon the habits of our fathers. What a condition of things do records like the Greville Memoirs and the Creevey Papers reveal in the early nineteenth century, and that amongst the most eminent public men! "Lord Grey came in drunk from the Duke of York's, where he had been dining." "Old Sidmouth was never sober." Brougham, speaking in the House of Commons in 1827, "was so very tipsy that for some time he did not know what he said." Lamb's half-humorous, half-bitter, "D——n temperance and he that first invented it —some anti-Noahite!" represents pretty much the feeling of the time. We are a clear step beyond that. But what of our eating? The fare offered you at a modern hotel for breakfast, luncheon and dinner represents the average feeding of comfortable Society; and in flesh food alone, as science is now loudly telling us, the menu contains three times more than we have any business to swallow. When shall we attain to an hotel that will feed us rationally? Here is a reform for which we must look, not to the House of Commons, but to a clearer knowledge amongst men, and rich men especially, of the essential laws of life.

In connection with bodily habit, as related to inner discipline, a cardinal principle should be the maintenance and daily assertion of the supremacy of the instructed will over all custom and usage.

It is well to try a fall with our habits now and then, if only to see how we stand to them. When the smoker is reduced to despair by a week's deprivation of tobacco, it is time for him to give up his pipe. If our faith in God and man depends on so many hours in bed, it were well to straightway revise our time-table. Whether the Chinese in South Africa are slaves or not may be a moot point, but there is no doubt there are abundance of slaves, well-to-do and well-fed, in England, and it is time they shook off their chains. At all costs let us carry in us a free and independent soul.

Thus of the outer, but there is also the inner. That is an admirable definition of fasting which Clement of Alexandria gives us in the "Stromata": "Now fastings signify abstinence from all evils whatsoever, both in action and in word, and in thought itself." "In thought itself!" Our religion has done nothing for us unless it has given us an easy control here. It is in this realm, indeed, that its whole triumph lies. Its grandest product is the entire and joyful acquiescence in whatsoever befalls us. The notion of religion as an assurance against calamities is too naïve. It is rather a preparation for them and a state of soul for meeting them. Circumstance may play its worst trick upon us; it may reduce us in a moment from wealth to poverty, from strength and activity to the extremity of weakness. The soul, disciplined by faith, will meet that extremity and not be cowed by it. It will realise with Vauvenargues that "despair is the worst of our errors." Its whole development will have taught it to accept life,

in whatsoever strange and repelling form it for the moment offers itself, as a present good and the promise of an infinite better. It is a great thing to be taught our utter nothingness. After we have tasted that sensation we are ready for what generally comes next, the sense of the Divine sufficiency. We rest in a system of things which is too vast for our comprehension, but which we feel to be good. We know ourselves as in an orderly universe with Infinite Perfection at its centre.

It is by such inner discipline, and by no other process, that we arrive at the perception of the higher truths. Good comes first, truth afterwards. *Les grandes pensées viennent du cœur.* The heart knows truths which the reason cannot formulate. We require a certain inner height to discern life's greatest secret. It is given alone to the pure in heart to see God.

XXXII

On Being Worldly

St. John's text, "Love not the world," is one of those master words which are at once an interpretation of life and a direction of it. That such a word should ever have been uttered by a man to men is in itself a portent. It reveals humanity as something greater, stranger, than the wisest of us can understand. The appeal is to something beyond the senses, beyond the cold reason. The soul in its inmost depths recognises the word as a true one, answering to something essential to its own life and progress. That it was uttered, and with such prodigious effect, is only intelligible on the supposition that man is, as Lamennais puts it, "torn asunder between two worlds . . . that he has one foot in the finite and the other in the infinite." It is in proportion as men are cultivated, as they understand life, as they live it to the broadest and fullest, that they catch the apostolic meaning here, and give to its injunction their fullest weight of endorsement.

It takes, we say, a highly-developed nature to catch the real flavour of this utterance. That is the reason why raw and untrained minds have made

such ludicrous travesties of it. In the entire wide region of religious aberration there is no more curious spectacle than the fantasies which the rendering of this text has produced. Men have fled from worldliness, banned it, exorcised it, without stopping to ask first what worldliness means. They have abandoned cities and dwelt in the wilderness under the notion that they were escaping the world. With the same idea people have worn uniforms, eschewed amusements, drawn a line between themselves and outsiders, abandoned politics, abandoned business, shut themselves up in monasteries and nunneries. The world to be shunned was to them the world of average human society and of the average human activity.

Perhaps the oddest phase of supposed unworldliness—one which has still a wide enough vogue—is that which may be described as future-worldliness. Its condition of mind is one of desire for all the good things going, but with a postponement of their enjoyment to a later date and another sphere. We see this disposition in full swing in the Jewish community of the first Christian century. Their national hopes were at zero. Israel was oppressed under a foreign yoke, and the only escape from a world that had become intolerable seemed to lie in a supernatural interposition in which their promised Messiah should appear, overwhelming their enemies, and securing to them the power and splendour for which they thirsted. We have here the origin of that voluminous apocalyptic literature with which the time abounded. This spirit has lingered into our own days. There are

people who, Bible in hand, declare the world a bad world, close to a bad end. They anticipate a catastrophe for most of us, and a reign of splendour for the saints. Their heaven is as material a one as Park Lane, the only difference being one of time and place. The habit of mind here—of keeping aloof from the visible prosperities of to-day in anticipation of bigger ones of the same order to-morrow—reminds one of nothing so much as of a Temperance association reported of amongst some Northern miners, who practised total abstinence for a certain period in order with the money thus saved to have a sustained orgie later on.

The notion of worldliness, or its opposite, as having anything to do with time or place is a primitive one, outgrown by all but primitive minds. Eternity, with all that belongs to it, is now if ever. Cataclysms and so-called world-endings have nothing to do with morality. And the material world is not likely to end yet. Modern science, which traces the history of our planetary system back through immeasurable æons to the time when it was a nebula, a fiery mist—and forward through uncounted millions of years to the time when the dead sun and planets will become a nebula again—gives us an outlook which differs considerably from these naïve Jewish conceptions. The spiritual life belongs to another sphere from that of big happenings, stunning to the senses, and of dates in the almanac.

What, then, is it to be worldly? It assuredly does not mean loving the world we open our eyes on of a morning. If that were worldliness, then Jesus was the greatest of worldlings. How He loved

this world! Never in any human soul did its beauty strike a deeper chord. The deep blue sky of Galilee, the flowers by its lake, the gambols of the children, the homely business, the simple social intercourse of the countryside—all this mirrored itself on that clear spiritual surface as an image of delight. It was the Father's world, and it was good. Assuredly the man who talks pessimism is not thereby proclaiming himself unworldly. Voltaire's, "*Après tout c'est un monde passable,*" and Lamb's "I assure you I find this world a very pretty place," are good, honest utterances. The man who can find no good in this world is not likely to find it in any other.

The real worldliness, that against which the apostolic word and all the soul's highest instincts warn us, is that of a disposition without faith and without love. It is the absence, or the fatal overlaying, of the spiritual instinct. The great scientist Pasteur, in a striking passage, speaks of the double man in us, the one taking note of all that appeals to the senses, and the other feeling an appeal from something, somewhere beyond sense, and vibrating in response to that mystic note. All the best minds of humanity have felt that appeal. It is repeated by the Indian sages, by the great Greek teachers, most impressively of all by the Christian Gospel. When Plato in the "Phædo" and in the "Gorgias" declares for a world of divine ideas, beyond sense, in which is the one Reality, and where the soul finds its home, he forecasts the result of the best science and philosophy of our time. Modern metaphysic by a pitiless

analysis has shattered every supposition of materialism, and shown us that if there be a Reality it lies not there. The latest science echoes that word. To Sir Oliver Lodge life appears "as something whose full significance lies in another scheme of things." Science is thus leading to something beyond science as alone supplying the solution of the world's riddle.

The unworldly man, then, is he who, by whatsoever path he has reached it, has arrived at a full sense and conviction of this invisible scheme, this spiritual order of the universe. The highest intuitions of his nature, the voices within that speak of love, duty, purity, sacrifice as the absolutely vital things, are by him accepted as the final authority. To obey these voices is to be religious, to disobey them is to be infidel. Every heroic life is built on these suppositions. Wherever you see a man taking his life in his hands at the call of duty, stripping himself of present ease or goods that he may serve his neighbour, you see a believer, whatever the name he calls himself. Such a man does not despise the visible. Why should he? It is God's artistry. The beauty of sound, of sight, of odour is treasure poured out of God's soul. But the beauty of the visible has its chief appeal to him as an image and emblem of a diviner beauty still, which not eye hath seen nor ear heard.

By this standard we can measure the worldlings. There are people who have absolutely no sense of all this. So far as we can see they are born without it. It is like being without an ear for music. They are in all classes, and some of them are highly

educated. You may meet them in social intercourse for years, and amidst all their sayings, witty, sparkling, full of knowledge of the world, you shall never, by any chance, catch an inspiring utterance, a word that expresses remotest suspicion of aught higher, better than they see. It is not in them, and you cannot get blood out of a post. All one can say is that, as related to the highest development, they are sub-human. Poor creatures! God suffers them, and therefore we must.

By the side of this race of the spiritually colour-blind, we find a great class of the dim-sighted; or perhaps, shall we say, of the near-sighted. Their retina receives a very clear vision of the world they touch, but only confused and feeble rays from the other. Duty means something to them, but interest so much more. And so their aims, instead of curving upward till they meet in God, curve downward to find their end in self. A Seneca, whom Carlyle describes as "the father of all such as wear shovel hats," trying at the same time to stand well with truth and with Nero, is their type among philosophers. He certainly was of the race represented by the philosopher, who, when asked by his king "why sages were seen at the doors of kings, but not kings at the doors of sages," replied, "Because sages knew what was good for them and kings did not." Of all worldlings of this species the ecclesiastical worldling is the strangest and most sinister specimen. It is the singular danger of professional religion that it tends to atrophy the very instincts which it is set apart to serve. The ecclesiastic studies human

nature until the temptation comes to him to study its weak points, its errors, its credulities, in order to profit by them. To use spiritual means for the promotion of personal ends is the damnable infidelity to which the devil draws him. It is thus that the worldly-minded ecclesiastic becomes the most dangerous of men. When faith dies in a nation it is the Churchman who kills it. France to-day is in search of a religion. Her succession of ecclesiastical rulers and politicians—a Richelieu, a Mazarin, a Talleyrand—succeeded to-day by the priests who engineered the Dreyfus business, have nearly finished the old one.

Modern society in all departments of its life can only be saved by its unworldly men. We want politicians and statesmen of this breed. Plato's cry for philosophers as State rulers meant that the only men for such posts were such as were rooted in the Eternal. Happily there were and are such. Creighton's remark about Hildebrand's monk-popes, who ruled the world while renouncing it, suggests the high road here. A man may be in the foremost place and keep the heart of a child. He will keep it by abiding in God, ready to rule or to serve, to be at top or bottom if only it be His will. At present politics are an ugly scramble, and Church life is little better. When Lord Grey resigned in 1834 he told Creevey that he had 300 applications for peerages and a perfectly endless number for baronetcies. In the Church, of all denominations, the rush for front places is just as fierce and as ruthless. Men will talk angelically on a public platform about humility and self-renunciation, their

chief thought being meanwhile to get their name advertised and their address published. The spiritual education, both of the world and of the Church, is as yet clearly only at its beginning. We see our nobler, inner world but dimly, "as through a glass darkly." We need all of us to get our vision purged. The reform of the soul is a more urgent need than the reform of Parliament. When we are at last fairly in love with that highest world—the world opened to us in the New Testament, which Jesus lived in, and where all the noblest aspirations have their springs—we shall be fit for whatever post or work is assigned us, and carry a clean soul through it all.

XXXIII

Of Self-Creation

"You are a poem, though your poem's naught," cries Browning in one of his verses. We might go further and say of every man that he is not only poem but poet. He is so in the old Greek sense, where the word "poet" stands first of all for the doer, the maker. That is man's title on this planet, the maker—one might in a sense say, the creator. The animals, in their countless generations, leave the world very much as they find it. But this other animal, on his way through, shapes a thousand monuments of himself. He breathes his thought upon wood and stone and iron, and they stand henceforth as forms of his imagination. He flings his will outward, and it cuts its way through mountain and forest, making a new thing of the ancient earth. He weds the invisibles of his soul to the solid material he finds without, by processes which become ever more complicated, ever more daring, until the prospect opens of his bringing into subjection every element, every cosmic force. Indeed is he the poet, the "maker."

But all this mastery outside is but a small part of man's creative function. Its most wonderful

feature is exhibited in the action of it upon himself. To make railways and steam-engines and ships and palaces is no small thing. But all this becomes insignificant in comparison with another work on which he is engaged—that of remaking himself. Man has to-day a competitor who will in the end beat him out of the field. It is that other man, the man that is to be, whom he is creating. Man is king now over all he sees, but he works incessantly for his own deposition. As surely as the child dies into the man, so surely will our present manhood die into a better. Of all his cunning processes, the magic of his looms, of his retorts, this is the crowning work, incessantly, silently going on, the weaving, to wit, of new brain and heart, the sketching of a vaster human structure of which future ages will witness the great completion.

Our business, however, in the present article is not with the age-long movement of our race as a whole. We are contributing to that, but in the meantime there is a business closer home. It is that of the creation of ourselves as individuals. The world process is being repeated in you and me. In our several callings we are making a thousand things—boots, buildings, leading articles, what not. Beyond that we are at this moment, as in every past moment, engaged in the work of making ourselves. There is, we are aware, a modern school that denies this, and holds that what goes on within us is as mechanical and inevitable as the revolution of the planet or the wash of the wave on the shore. Physiologists, like Bichat, argue that character is unchangeable, depending on the organic structure and functions.

To which it is enough for us to reply, with Dr. Johnson, "all theory is against the freedom of the will, all experience for it." The logic of life is deeper than the logic of the schools, and we have only to examine what passes in our own interior to realise the immense extent to which we have been put in trust with this business. It is not what I am but what I can be, not the actual but the immense possible, that gives life its finest inspiration. Let us examine the ground a little here.

There are two factors that are incessantly weaving man; the one is his faculty of reception, the other his volition. As to the former, one notes a striking recent suggestion of Sir Oliver Lodge: "That the whole of us may not be incarnated in our present selves. What the rest of me may be doing for these few years while I am here I do not know; perhaps it is asleep." It might, we think, be put more simply and yet more impressively than that. Is it not that the whole universe is the unincarnated part of us? We are related to it all, and have incessant commerce with all its parts. The light from its farthest star falls on our retina, the forces that move Sirius work on our nerves. So far as we can see there are none of its resources we may not absorb, none of its wealth by which we may not enrich ourselves. We are the meeting-point of the Cosmos, the playground of its forces, the clearing-house of its treasure. Year by year, century by century, man is becoming immeasurably mightier by his growing intimacy with his universe.

The other factor in man's self-creation is, we

have said, his power of volition. The question of the will has, in latter-day philosophy, been thrown into some strangely new aspects. Schopenhauer, in his "*Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*," gives us will as something before intellect, before consciousness, as the prime motor of the universe, the ultimate cause. It is not necessary to follow the German philosopher into these conclusions to estimate to the full the tremendous power of the faculty which, under the name of the will, we find lodged within us, In its operations we see creation if we see it anywhere. The roar of avalanches, the rush of Niagaras, are not to compare, in the mystery of their power, with the silent movement which we call a volition. Niagara could sweep ten thousand men down its gulf without feeling it; but the idea beating in the brain of one of those ten thousand may suffice to chain Niagara and to make bond slaves of its powers.

We want, however, now to observe the action of will upon character, its action as self-creator. What takes place here reminds us of nothing so much as that play of radiant matter of which Sir William Crookes has given us such amazing revelations. In a closed tube, where almost a vacuum is made to exist, we have a rush of invisible molecules of such rapidity and force that a mass of metal under their impact becomes red-hot, and will even melt if the attack is prolonged. These molecules, we say, so minute yet so mighty, remind us of the impact upon the personality of those mysterious will-impulses which in a strong character, streaming from the centre, are necessarily working

upon and transforming the entire moral structure. Poor are we indeed in inner resource if we have not experienced the power of this working.

Take, for instance, the question of temperament. Is it possible to recreate one's temperament? It is easy to put the matter to proof. There are men who carry in them a tendency to melancholy. Poor poet Gray, himself a victim, has described it for us. "But there is another sort, black indeed, that has something in it like Tertullian's rule of faith. *Credo quia impossibile est.* For it believes, nay, is sure of, everything that is unlikely, so it be but frightful; and on the other hand excludes and shuts its eyes to the most possible hopes, and everything that is pleasureable." But the melancholy man has his remedy. It lies in the daily energy of his will. When the black thoughts come, a strong volition, like a breeze from the north, will sweep away the clouds. We can will the thoughts which are to come to us, the memories on which to feed, the prospects for the mind to gaze upon. Our world will change for us by the constant repetition of this process. The mind will act here as the body acts. When we first learn to walk our every step demands a separate volition. After the process has been kept up through the days and weeks the action that required these studied efforts becomes automatic, and we walk easily without thinking about it. And the will which does this for the body will do it also for the mind. If we *will* to be cheerful, to banish the unwholesome fancies, the brooding resentments, the sense of slights and injuries, and instead to summon

to our thought the causes of gratitude, the sense of the good in life, the reasons for aspiration and hope, we can do it. The lapses from all this may be frequent, as an infant's falls are frequent; but let us after each stumble pick ourselves up and move on, and in time the joy-sense will become a habit, and we shall wake up daily in clear weather.

It is in this way that men create their world, and make a good one or a bad one of it, apart from all considerations of external fortune. They have made it by making themselves. Seneca observes of Diogenes that "he kept himself outside the fortuitous. It is as if he had said, 'Do your business fortune: you have nothing to do with Diogenes.'" Mr. Moncure Conway, in his autobiography, speaks of a negro woman he knew in his youth as the happiest person he ever met. "Her quick intelligence, her humour, her humility and simplicity, and indefinable qualities that I never knew in any white person made her to me a revelation." Here was happiness achieved against perhaps the heaviest handicap that modern life offers. The powerlessness of fortune as compared with will in the making of character is vividly illustrated in the case of the two great moralists Vauvenargues and La Rochefoucauld. Of the two a French critic observes: "La Rochefoucauld, born into the first rank, dowered with great fortune, loved with the most passionate love in his youth, surrounded by illustrious and exquisite friendship in old age, overwhelmed as it seemed with all fortune's favours, brings from the voyage of life only a bitter experience, and from the spectacle

of humanity a disdainful pessimism. Vauvenargues, on the contrary, poor, always suffering, unfortunate in all his enterprises, preserves the serenity of his soul and the equity of his judgment, proclaiming man's capacity of goodness, disinterestedness and love." We repeat, the will is omnipotent in this sphere if we will only use it. We may not, perhaps, achieve wealth or empire. But if we do not reach this brightness of inner temper the fault is not God's or the world's ; it is our own.

But self-creation does not end here. It extends not only over temperament, but also over the whole of our mental life. Our mind at the beginning is an acorn which, according as we will, may or may not become an oak. We do not know our brain capacity until we have put it to the utmost test of our will capacity. Whether or no you read trashy books in one language, or read the world's best books in half a dozen languages, is an affair of your own choice. To learn is as easy as to eat, if we give ourselves to it. And talking of eating, it may be well to remind ourselves of that saying of Plato in the "Protagoras," about the right food for the soul. We can, says he, when we buy provision for the body in the market, take it away with us, store it, and use it or not use it, as we think fit. But the soul's food, the doctrine we get from books or from teachers, enters at once directly into us, and we cannot escape its effects for good or ill. And so we need here with the greater care to choose our food. That choice, again, is an affair of the will. What mental company are we keeping ? Do we live habitually with the great souls,

forming ourselves on their noble ideals, drawing into us the sap of their strength, breathing the divine air they live in? Or are we content with the garbage and the loathsome fog-atmosphere of the world's literary slums?

In closing, let it be observed that there is an all-important side of this question, a religious side, which we have not touched. We have let it alone in order to emphasize a feature in self-creation which religious teachers are apt to neglect. We agree with them fully in their main assertion that man's re-creation is ultimately a Divine business. The receptive capacity on which our highest hopes depend is before all things a capacity to receive the power from above, the secret, silent energy of the Spirit. But the tendency of the hour in many religious circles is to keep man on the move by outside pressures, the emotionalism of revival meetings, the dram-drinking of high-wrought excitements. Whereas what we want above all things to-day is a machinery that works from within. Says a French writer, "*Aujourd'hui l'homme désire immensément, mais il veut faiblement.*" The need of our time is great willing. Here, in the deeps of us, let us in the strength of God weave the garment of our manhood, our vesture of eternity.

XXXIV

The Farther Side

HAVE any of our readers been through the clouds and seen them from their upper side? It is a marvellous experience, of which the balloonist has not the entire monopoly. The spectacle is granted sometimes to the mountaineer. The present writer has vivid remembrance of a dull November afternoon in the Jura, when, plunging into the heavy cloud which all day had hid sun and sky, he toiled upwards, till suddenly, in one dazzling moment, he found himself outside and above it all. He was in a realm of glorious sunshine. Above was the dazzling blue; away to his right lay a rolling sea of magnificent cloud colours; at the far side of this sea, gleaming in the white radiance of their snow raiment, rose the whole mighty range of the Alps. What a scene, and what a parable! This same cloud, which, from one side and in one aspect, glowered over the world as the image of all that was gloomy and forbidding, required only another view-point to stand revealed as in itself beautiful beyond imagination, while serving as the foundation of the sublimest of world-pictures.

Herein, we say, is a parable, but we have to

take care that we do not press it too far. It is not always by any means that "the farther side" yields a result of this kind. The topic, indeed, might as easily be handled by the pessimist as by the optimist. The one as well as the other would find abundant material if he sought for it. Let us, divesting ourselves as far as may be of existing prepossessions, try impartially to examine the ground for ourselves, and see what we find there.

To begin with, we have to note that every experience of life has its farther side, a side which invariably differs radically and essentially from the nearer one. Life, as Heraclitus long ago taught us, "is an eternal flux." When people complain of the changefulness, the restlessness of the world, they forget that this is the very condition of its existence. If change ceased, we should cease; for life, whether of the separate germ-cell or of the entire organism of the universe, is movement first and last. We can never keep a sensation or an experience in one stay. Each has its beginning, its culmination, its end. What finally remains of them is a deposit, and it is out of these deposits that our soul is built. And as it is with a single sensation felt in our own mind, so is it on an ever-widening scale with all that takes place in history and the corporate life of humanity. Our race, we discover, has conditions of feeling, epochs of ideas, which may last for centuries or millenniums, but which, nevertheless, are always moving. They all partake of the inevitable process; they have their rise, their culmination, their decay. In their extinction these also leave their deposit, to be

taken up into new births of the world's life. Man has by now had a tolerably wide experience of this movement, and it is time we had learned some lessons from it. Let us see, in some particulars, how the matter stands.

Youth has at once the advantage and disadvantage of beginning on the near side of everything. It is not tall enough to see over the wall, and knows only of that side by report. And commonly it takes the report somewhat cheaply. "Youth," says Turgeneff, "imagines life to be an affair of gilt gingerbread. It will be glad afterwards if it finds dry bread to eat." In those charmed hours the great pleasure-sensations, the intoxications of eye, ear and touch, the raptures of satisfied desire, seem everything. They show their front view, and the view is full of charm. But "Onward!" is the life watchword. To every this a that; to every act a consequence; to every experience "the moment after." There is one judgment of life while the draught is being drunk; there is that other of the *lendemain de fête* when the cup is drained. Have we been able to assimilate these two things and draw from their union some wholesome result?

The world has now, through many thousands of years, been grinding its lesson into our race, and there is no mistake about the trend of its teaching. Our philosophies and theologies offer us endless puzzles, but on the essential things we have, out of the heart of life itself, the simplest and clearest of messages. Life gives us its own gospel of the farther side. If we would find it a good side we must approach it in one way. You must enter our

cloud from the lower, the sombre end of it. It is a climb. Nature always starts her chosen ones upon drudgery. Literature begins upon them with grammars and dictionaries. Music is a pounding of scales, long hours of weary repetitions. There is no royal road. The cloud is before us to trudge through. But if we do manfully trudge through we find always at the end the white mountains and the blue sky. Through drudgery, incessant self-discipline, we come to our power, to our wealth of acquisition, to our sources of high-enduring enjoyment. The lesson is so plain that one is amazed that people anywhere fail to see it. The best men of every age and creed always have seen it. Marcus Aurelius, in reckoning up his supreme advantages, does not speak of his accession to wealth and empire, but of the fact that as a youth he was taught to endure hardness, to work with his hands and to mind his own business.

With the same deadly certainty does the nature of things express the other half of its doctrine here. It has put up its strait gate and narrow way, and shows no mercy to trespassers or those who would "climb up some other way." It knows the skulker by sight, and has its own manner of treating him. Calvinism used to talk of the eternal decrees, and there certainly are some. The decree of the farther side to toil and self-restraint is one; the decree of the farther side to laziness and indulgence is another. Some of the present generation appear to proceed on the supposition that this decree has recently been annulled. They will discover in due time that it is still in full force, and that there

is no remotest corner of the universe where it fails to operate.

But this is a road already trodden hard by the moralists. Life offers us some more complex problems than that of the issues of hardwork and high aims *versus* idleness and sensualism. The high aims themselves have their far side, which is not always roseate. The middle-aged man of our generation looks back on a dozen enthusiasms and beliefs of his youth which, in the backward glance, wear a quite different aspect now from then. If he were now to write the history of them he would write largely as an outsider. He has come to understand that pregnant saying of Carlyle: "A man, I think, is ready to write on a thing when he perceives he has got above it, that he has shaken it off from him, and can survey it without egoism, spleen, exaggeration, or other perversion." How absolute we were in those days in our judgment of men and things! How sure of our own side! We took all our teachers told us for gospel. We accepted their reading of history. The men of our party were heroes, opposed to them were the powers of darkness. To-day we are less sure of our good and bad. We discover that our side, as well as the other, is, and has been, so very human! We find with Baxter that the good men are not so good as we thought them, nor the bad so ill. We say with Johnson: "As I know more of mankind I expect less of them, and am ready now to call a man a good man on easier terms than formerly."

But to a properly-developed soul the view from

the farther side, while inducing scepticism about many things, will bring no scepticism about life itself. We may grow doubtful about this or that patent scheme of reform. We may, to quote Johnson again, go so far as to say with him, "Why, sir, most schemes of political improvement are very laughable things." Ballot Acts, Franchise Acts, the upsetting of this Government and the setting up of that; we have lived through so much of this, to discover how different are the results from what was hoped for. And yet do we despair of politics? Not at all. Reform will go on in that sphere, though not by the clash of parties. It is and has ever been by a spiritual process. Socrates utters the secret of it when, in the "Gorgias," he declares that he is the only politician in Athens, for while others intrigue and seek for votes he seeks to improve the State by improving the souls of the citizens.

In the long run, when we have got to the farther side of all our experiments, we shall discover that this is the only way. And it is the way which the world will assuredly reach in the end. Is it not a wonderful thing that, whatever new road man breaks open for himself, if he follow it far enough, it always leads him out at the farther side to a spiritual result? A generation ago it seemed as though we were being engulfed in materialism. The prophets of science were proclaiming it as the latest news of the universe. Moleschott's aphorism, "no thought without phosphorus," was solemnly repeated as though it settled everything. But to-day science, not by backing out of its tunnel, but

by going forward in it, by becoming more scientific still, finds itself emerging at the farther end once more into full daylight. From the scientists we are obtaining, bit by bit, a conception of matter, of man and of the universe which will become the surest foundation of the theology of the future.

It is, as we have said, not by running away from investigation, but by going forward in it, that faith, however seemingly shaken and dislodged for a time, comes eventually again into its kingdom. The farther side is always *its* side. Nothing is more common, for instance, than for people to be thrown off their religious balance by so-called "explanations" of the things they have believed. Some one writes a history of God—a history, that is, of the human theistic belief—and imagines that in this way he has extinguished theism. One might as well propose to extinguish the universe by tracing the evolution of the eye that sees it. We forget how very small the distance is over which our "explanations" carry us; how vast the background behind. Just now some psychologists are explaining for us the phenomena of revivals. They are an affair of psychic force and of the subtle interaction of crowds. Each individual is a magnet, a centre of odic powers. Under certain conditions these emanations are even visible. When a multitude of persons are together, all governed by the same fixed ideas, and stirred to a given condition of feeling, the fused, subliminal consciousness of the company develops abnormal powers sufficient to account for all the phenomena. But what then! When we

have accepted all this are we at the end of our fact; have we done away with our revival? We talk of our "fixed ideas"; where did they come from? We speak of "the subliminal consciousness"; what has moved it in this particular direction? Why, we still ask, are men, under the action of this consciousness, breaking from their old sins and leading a new life? To give us the "subliminal consciousness" as the substitute here for God is as though one should offer an account of the keyboard and wires of a piano as accounting, without Beethoven, for the "Moonlight Sonata."

After finding ourselves at the far side successively of innumerable early emotions, enthusiasms, delusions, we wake up to the feeling that we are getting towards the far side of life itself. It is a region which, to traverse successfully, requires abundant preparation. If we are to escape the "*tristis senectus*" of which Virgil, in some memorable lines, complains so bitterly, we must begin the preparation early. As we approach the region we experience some new, singular sensations. One of the strongest of them, with some of us, is that of the immense, ever increasing value of time. Our account in years is diminishing so rapidly. We feel with Seneca "how many people have been allowed to pillage your life while you were not even aware you were being robbed!" We realise how much has gone on the mere apparatus of living, instead of being devoted to life itself, the highest life! There must be no more waste. What remains of time must be concentrated on the best things. This "farther side" is clearly the place

for faith, for the clearer vision. We draw near the lower edge of the cloud, which, when it finally enfolds us, will shut out the view of all this under world. But we shall enter it with a good heart, knowing as we do of that upper side, where stand the white mountains overarched by the cloudless blue.

W. SPEAIGHT AND SONS,
PRINTERS,
FETTER LANE, LONDON, E.C.

DATE DUE

DEC 1 '47
Ag 27 '48
DEC 14 '51
JAN 8 1952
APR - 9 1958
AUG 16 1958
OCT 17 1972
~~NOV 3 1972~~
JAN 2 '79
DEC 16 1993
DEC 16 1993

3 5132 00037 7648
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC LIBRARY

BR
100
B76

Brierley, Jonathan
Religion and Experience